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VIDEO VOICE

WILDER, MUCH WILDER!



AMAZING!

THE She-Creature

INTERVIEWS WITH:
JIM MORTON
SINISTER CINEMA

INTRODUCTION: ARMED AND READY FOR BATTLE

Remember when I said that the last issue was the 100% reconditioned VIDEO VOICE? Well this issue is the NEW, IMPROVED and REVAMPED one! Dave and I have worked long and hard on this one to try and bring you, dear readers, something akin to our very flesh and blood. VIDEO VOICE #11 has to be our most thought-out and carefully constructed work to date. No, we haven't sold out our fanzine origins.

We're just fan-ish examples of perfection.



Our cover: Paul Blaisdell
as **THE SHE CREATURE**.

NEXT ISSUE:
Fanzine Editors speak
out, suprise
interviews, and crazed
reviews. See you in
October!

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**"FRANKENSTEIN MEETS
THE SPACE MONSTER"**

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VIDEO*VOICE #11 is dedicated to the memory of Mike the Wolf.

NOVEMBER 1988

VV: Tell us about Pop Void, your current project. What is it and when did it come out?
JM: The first issue just arrived. POP VOID is a book that's dedicated to the things in our culture that people either tend to overlook or prefer not to think about. That could be anything from Rod McKuen and big-eyed-kid paintings to Kraft macaroni and cheese dinners and nudist colonies. It's quite a compendium of stuff. BUT NOTHING ABOUT MOVIES (laughs)!

VV: What made you decide to go in this direction?

JM: Well... it's just something that interests me! I'm very interested in pop culture, obviously, and I just thought there should be a journal that explores those things in our culture.

VV: Why don't you fill us in on the history of TRASHOLA (the seminal film zine from the early 80's that Morton wrote-edited)? Are any issue left?

JM: TRASHOLA started in 1981 around June. I did it for three years exactly at which time I stuffed it.

VV: Why?

JM: From the very start I planned to stop it after three years. I didn't want to get into the situation where I would be doing this little fanzine for the rest of my life. It's a lot of work! Putting out a fanzine is lots of work and not much thanks.

VV: Are there copies still available from you?

JM: Nope, they're all gone! I still get inquiries from people who have read about it in RE-SEARCH #10 INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS. I'm sad to say they're two years too late!

VV: Have you considered putting some of the issues together in a collection?

JM: Well, in a way I did with INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS. Some of the articles in that started as articles for TRASHOLA. The LSD article and the beach party article were both originally in very crude forms in TRASHOLA.

VV: What did you think of the finished product? Were you pleased with INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS?

JM: Well, originally I don't think we planned for it to fly under the RE-SEARCH banner but I think that was just a matter of not consulting with RE-SEARCH closely enough. All in all, I'm happy with the book. There's a few things that I'm not real crazy about. I don't like the Young Playthings essay. Some of the other essays weren't to my liking either, but I think it's a good book. I'm not embarrassed that my name's on it.

VV: It's pretty darn successful, is it not?

JM: Yes, I believe it's done quite well!

VV: I also read somewhere that they were thinking about releasing a Volume Two?

JM: There's talk about that. There's a couple of guys in New York that may be working on something like that. I'm not involved with it. I gotta get POP VOID out! I've got enough to do (laughs)!

VV: What do you think about today's fanzines? Do you read any at all?

JM: I get a few of them. The guy that does SCAREPHANALIA sends me his fanzine. I read HI TECH TERROR and a couple others. GORE GAZETTE. I still subscribe to.

VV: Are you kinda burned out on the whole thing?

JM: Unfortunately, most of the fanzines are about horror and gore. TRASHOLA wasn't about horror and gore. It was about peculiar films. Sometimes I would even review porno movies if I thought they were strange enough. My favorite fanzine was SLEAZOID EXPRESS.

It was put out by a guy named Bill Landis, a real brilliant guy but I think his flame burned a little too bright (laughs)! Nobody knows what he's doing now. He's keeping a low profile. It would be worth your while to hunt down copies of SLEAZOID EXPRESS. I recommend them.

VV: Where can we see films by Joe Sarno and some of the other more obscure directors and films listed in INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS? Are they available on video?

JM: Nope! Unfortunately there's only a couple Joe Sarno films available on video cassette and they're both crummy! One of them is called CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG AMERICAN HOUSEWIFE. It's a terrible movie! You should avoid it if at all possible! Another is a film called BUTTERFLIES which is a softcore film he did with Harry Reams and then hardcore shots were added later. Both of those are eminently skipable! His stuff's not available on video and it's too bad.

VV: What about Dave Friedman's films like SEVEN INTO SNOWY? Have you seen those around?

JM: Very few of Dave's films are on video. Unfortunately it's hard to convince people that there's a market for old b/w exploitation. They just sit on the film. Some of the David Friedman stuff and the Lee Frost/Bob Creese stuff is available on bootlegs, but I've yet to walk into a video store and find MONDO BIZARRO!

VV: Well, it would be nice if they did release some of these movies. The book certainly piqued my interest! Reading INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS was wonderful, but it's also frustrating. I wish I could see all the films I read about!!!

JM: Well, that's always been a problem. People ask me where I got my videos from, but the sad truth is a lot of it I saw when I was young. So...tough luck! If you didn't see it when you were young **TOUGH LUCK** (laughs)! I thought if we put the book out, if we told people about **YOUNG PLAYTHINGS**, about **SIN IN THE SUBURBS**, about **MOONLIGHTING WIVES**, then maybe video people would wake up and put them on video tape. They really should!

VV: Are there any movies that you'd love to see but for some reason you haven't?

JM: That's a good question! When people used to ask me that the number one film that I wanted to see was **CURSE OF HER FLESH** - the Roberta and Michael Findlay film. I wanted to see that movie so bad, and I finally got to see it. It's really shitty! I would like to see a lot more of the old burlesque films from the 40s. **STRIP TEASE GIRLS**, **VARITEASE** (which starred Betty Page) and **KISS ME BABY BURLESQUE** are all the films I'd love to see. They're probably real bad. I'd love to see those movies, but they might not exist. I think most of the burlesque films are all gone.

VV: Have you seen any films recently that you'd like to mention?

JM: I saw a film recently (I don't know if it's available on video tape or not) called **THE HUMAN TORNADO**. It stars Rudy Ray Moore who's a black comedian. That movie is definitely worth seeing! I showed it to a few people and it just floored them. I think it came out around 1976. He did a film in 1975 called **DOLEMITE**. I think **THE HUMAN TORNADO** is the sequel to **DOLEMITE**. He followed that one up with **DISCO GODFATHER**. I know there's a video out called **RUDY RAY GETS RUDE**. I haven't seen that one, but I'm looking forward to it! The only other film I can think of that I've always loved and I tell people about it all the time -- I'm surprised and shocked at the number of people who haven't seen it -- is a film called **THE LOVED ONES**. It stars Jonathon Winters, Liberace, Robert Morse, and Sir John Gielgud. It came out around 1965!

VV: Tim Paxton's seen it, but I haven't!

JM: I recommend that to everybody.

VV: Any favorite directors?

JM: Well...Russ Meyer...and...Leslie. I guess my favorite director, and this is gonna sound strange coming from the guy who wrote **INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS**, is Louis Buñel.

VV: That's really nothing to be ashamed of (laughs)!

JM: (laughs) Kind of arty! It's a long way from **THE THRILL KILLERS** but...

VV: What's your opinion on some of the more maligned genre directors like Jess Franco and Andy Milligan?

JM: Yeah, it's weird! I even know people that like Lucio Fulci movies! I guess if you make enough movies then somebody's gonna love ya (laughs)! There's a moral in that for would-be-directors out there. Andy Milligan is interesting. I think Milligan's a theoretically interesting film maker. His films are real boring, but he makes them on

RESEARCH INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS



miniscule budgets and follows a few basic rules. He keeps action to a minimum. Most of his films are just people talking, because action's expensive. It's kind of clever from a theoretical standpoint, but watching it can be hell--

VV: And is!

JM: (laughs) Jess Franco's a little trickier because Jess Franco actually occasionally is not too bad.

VV: Have you seen a Franco film you would actually be willing to admit enjoying?

JM: Naw! I haven't enjoyed any of them immensely, but there are some of them that I think were OKAY! I thought **JACK THE RIPPER** was OKAY. I have to admit, these guys make 150 movies they're going to have fans. They're gonna get people that love 'em, but it won't be me!

VV: How did you get interested in these films? Did it start when you were young?

JM: I've been watching these movies from the time I was six years old so I was ready when **RE:SEARCH** asked me to write a book. Boyd Rice (**INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS** contributor and one heckava musician--editor) and I had done research our whole lives. It wasn't like we had to sit down and watch these films.

VV: Okay--now the really simple stuff. Seen any movies this year that you'd like to comment on?

JM: Oh boy! Well, I kinda liked both of Ken Russell's films this year **SALOME'S LAST DANCE** and **LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM**. They were pretty entertaining and nicely blasphemous. With **LAIR** he gets back to **THE DEVILS** level of blasphemy. I thought **THEY LIVE** had it's moments. I thought it was a great concept although it's the most male movie I've ever seen. I liked the concept of subliminals, though. I know lots of people who really hate it because of all it's maleness. It's been such slim pickens lately! Next week I'm going to see **ERNEST SAVE CHRISTMAS** so I'll let you know how that is!

VV: Okay! Last question: What's your favorite film of all time?

JM: When you've seen five jillion movies it gets real hard to pick one film! I don't think I can!

VV: How about five films? Maybe ten?

JM: Even that would be tough!

VV: Send us a top twenty-five!

JM: I could do that (laughs)!

END!

SEE THE MIGHTY GODZILLA IN A FIGHT TO THE DEATH
WITH HIS BIONIC DOOBLE!

VIDEO VISIONS

INCORPORATING LATE NIGHT EDITS★OLDIES★CHEAP VIDEO

This column has been one of the hardest for me to write. It compels me to sit down and really think hard about a film. In my ANIMATION column I write about my love of the subject. In my FOREIGN FLICKS column I write about my fascination for non-English, usually subtitled cinematic gems. With the rest of the departments I jot down what comes to me when I am seated at the computer. With VIDEO VISIONS, though, I usually have to try and write down in very painful, long-hand. For VIDEO VISIONS it isn't that these films are real mind-churning epics (oh so few of them will ever be such!), but I seem to have a hard time writing about them; capsulising them into reviews and giving them thought and scope. It's time for a change. As with my other publication MONSTER, I will approach this wretched column in an essay form. Good or bad, it will reflect my manner of thought, rather than my attempting to transfer my thoughts into chunky reviews. There probably won't be a major difference, except that the form will change and maybe my opinions on the films themselves.

STEREO: Being a semi-fanatical stereo-buff I usually rent anything that is recorded in HiFi stereo. There are a lot of junk out there, but somehow I just manage to sit through a bad film if the soundtrack is at all interesting. Effects--I love stereo effects where a car drives from one end of the room to the other, or when some indescribable monster plucks off someone's head and tosses it from the right side of the room to splat on the left. And occasionally, as with the film **HELLBOUND**, it is only the musical soundtrack that holds any real interest with me.

TRACK 29 (1988, D: Nicholas Roeg)

This is one of my favorite films of last year and my second favorite Nicholas Roeg film to date (the first being **INSIGNIFICANCE**-1985). **TRACK 29** is your usual, brilliant Roeg film concerning time dilation, crashing memories and a slip-slogging, mind-boggling, linear story. Any film that opens with my all time favorite episode of *Dangermouse* ("Demon's Dilemma") has to be a real gas! In fact the film is peppered with bizarre point-counter points through the use of various cartoons and films (ala Joe Dante, who used this kind of craziness with flair in **THE HOWLING**). There are cryptic references blurred out by Rocky and Bullwinkle, Tennessee Tuxedo, Underdog, and King Leonardo. Be on the lookout for Robert Mitchum threatening Lori Martin from the J. Lee Thompson film **CAPE FEAR** (1962). All of these fit within the framework of the film. **TRACK 29** is a film of strong passions, twisted longings, and strange desires. It's sort like an Oedipus Rex complex gone hog-wild. Theresa Russell (Roeg's real-life wife) plays a mentally disturbed housewife married to an equally odd husband, who is more infatuated with model trains than with anything else. Along comes Martin, a pale emaciated English creepazoid decked out in leather and a big cowboy hat, who literally pops out of thin air in search of his American mother (Russell). What proceeds is a beautiful, screwy film full of Roeg's boundless sense of the tragically absurd. Is Gary Oldman's loopy character a ghost conjured up by the fertile imagination of a woman yearning to see the child that was taken from her at birth? Is it her psychotic energy that fashions Martin into the equally insane image of that long sought after man-child? As with all of Roeg's films there isn't a perfect answer. Just sit back and enjoy the film. Don't miss the many gags that Nick tosses into the works. Look for a poster of George Harrison on the wall (the film was produced by Harrison for his Handmade Films) and other bits and pieces. Hi-Fi Stereo adds sparkle to an already perfect picture.

THEY LIVE (1988, D: John Carpenter)

YEEOW! I was having serious apprehensions about this film. I didn't see it in the theatres for fear of coming down with another case of intestinal flu as I did when I saw John Carpenter's previous film(?) **PRINCE OF DARKNESS** (see VV #9). That film was such a big load of garbage that when **THEY LIVE** hit the screens I shook my head in disgust and refused to go to it. Dave talked me into taking this film home along with my usual carload of videos for the weekend. Much to my surprise I was genuinely bowled over when I finally got around to viewing this video...Hey, even the soundtrack (in stunning Carpenter-Horowitz minimal stereo) shines



compared to the dull, painful eschere Carpenter produced for POD. This is a return to the quasi-cartoon/SF/adventure/post-ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK Carpenter that thrilled me with **BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA** a few years back. **THEY LIVE** features Earth as a back-water world to a bunch of corporate bug-eyed aliens who are in charge of breeding us for purely monetary reasons. They control our very existence with a powerful subconscious, subliminal manipulation that comes off on film as creepy reality! By punning on a special pair of sunglasses our hero, ex-WWF wrestler Roddy Piper, sees dollar bills as pieces of paper proclaiming I AM YOUR GOD, billboards of pretty women that actually proclaim MARRY & REPRODUCE, and hundreds of CONSUME, OBEY, and HATE signs dotting the landscape. Earth has been turned into the alien's own Third World, a place to exploit then abandon. The scene where Piper first puts on the glasses and witnesses all this lunacy is classic Cinema. How about that hilarious if not overlong fistcuffs sequence in the alley!!? I loved this film. Nice snappy ending to boot! What else is coming from Carpenter in the near future? How about the prequel to **ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK** I heard about a few years ago? [Ignore what the majority of reviewers have said about this film: SEE IT! SEE IT! SEE IT!]

LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM

(1988 D: Ken Russell)

Ken Russell's tongue-in-cheek parody of a Hammer Studio film hits the mark. While this film is far from Russell's best (**THE DEVILS**), it is at least a bit more coherent than his last horror effort (**GOTHIC**-which I liked, but clearly suffered due to some bad acting and lame Dolby soundtrack). He mimics a perfect Freddy Francis, which is to say that if he had done a send-up of a Terence Fisher film he would have made a masterpiece. Otherwise, **LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM** is satisfying, even though Russell goes a bit overboard with all the overt symbolism (which is, I guess, his way of saying "This is a Ken Russell film"). Still, not to complain too much, this was one of the better, more off-beat offerings to come out in a long time. The story is a very loose adaptation of Bran Stoker's short story, and Russell is able to mold it into his own warped vision. Russell doesn't like women too much, or so it appears from watching a good deal of his films. As with **THE DEVILS**, **TOMMY**, and **GOTHIC**, **LAIR** is subjugated to Russell's mistrust of and borderline misogynistic treatment of his female leads. That is not to say that this film reeks of hate. On the contrary, **LAIR**, while way off in the religious mumbo-

image of symbolism, would appear to be a naive look at horror films. In the loving tradition of Hammer, a monster is the focus of the film, and all the evil deeds done in the film are for the sole purpose of keeping the beastie fed (because the reason for the virginal sacrifice is old hat). The two heroes, an archaeologist and the bratty heir to the D'Ampton Household (the very family that killed a worm similar to the one that resides in a nearby cave/cavern basement on Lady Marsh's estate) distantly echo your typical Lee/Cushing duo from, say something like **HORROR EXPRESS** (1972) or **THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES** (1958), while Sammy Davis's heroine reminds me of a spunky Dr. WHO assistant! It would seem that a monstrous worm is kept alive, fed and looked after, by Lady Sylvia Marsh, a devout servant of some nearly dead Roman anti-Christian religion. When the skull of a previous "worm" is unearthed by an amateur archaeologist, the mystery of missing villagers begins to take on a sinister hue and people are turned into "vampire" slaves. Can the worm and its sacrifice/horror servant be stopped? Well, sure! But get ready for the obligatory "twist" ending which, although predictable, did muster a chuckle from me. The post-MTV psychedelic dream sequences (caused by contact with the spittle of Lady Sylvia's fangs) are clearly the entire reason for Russell's interest in the film. Here he creates some impressive scenes of Dali/Dada, LSD trippin' images smattered with blood, snakes, sex, suffering christis, and violated, nut-case nuns- the stuff all Ken Russell films are made of, distilled into some neat little twenty-second packages. A good film, and fun to listen to in stereo- but clearly a major disappointment coming from this guy.

THE CURSE II: THE BITE

(1989, D: Fred Goodwin)

Oh boy! Because TWE had a minor hit with a lame H.P. Lovecraft film **THE CURSE** (based on the Lovecraft short story **THE COLOR OUT OF SPACE**, which was previously mangled for some Boris Karloff programmer called **DIE MONSTER, DIE!**) they decided to go ahead and re-name another one of their misery-filled epics **THE CURSE II**, fooling people into renting it by mis-labeling it. Luckily, I was sent a preview copy so I saved my three bucks. In fact on the same preview cassette was a trailer for a *Kung-Fu/Vampire!* (!) epic called **DEVIL DYNAMITE** which looks a thousand times more entertaining than **THE CURSE II** turned out to be. This film is dull. I must admit I did fast-forward through about 85% of the flick in order to some exciting portions. There are none. You get a lot of real live snakes getting butchered on screen (squashed by cars, shot, mutilated). That's about it. Some city slicker and his girlfriend happen to drive through a radioactive desert (much to the warning of the gas-station geek - gotta listen to those warnings, you jerks!) and in the process our hero gets bit by a contaminated snake. His arm turns into a snake (!) via cheap SFX, and he goes on a rampage of ripping the still beating hearts out of people through their mouths. In a semi-gross, but predictable "climax" he pukes up hundreds of baby snakes then sheds his mortal skin to become some giant, skeletal serpent. Oh, but luckily for the viewer, Jamie Far (!) is on hand to blow the monster's head into hamburger with his trusty shotgun. There is supposed to be an unused version available. I doubt that version would be any better. I only wish they'd sent me **DEVIL DYNAMITE** instead!!!

HELLBOUND

(1988, D: Tony Randel)

HELLRAISER (see VV46) wasn't a bad bit of fringe-fluff. All that popular sex-gore-art-film making made it one of the bright spots in horror a few years back. Its sequel, to the contrary, had me scratching my head. All the extremely interesting concepts that began to bud in the first film were utilized to the point of becoming dull and over worked. The Cenobites are back with Pinhead squeezing every ounce of forbidding out of every word he utters. The heroine, Kirsty, is again the center of the film along with a puzzle-box enthusiast who doesn't talk for the majority of the adventure. Sex-addicts Julia and Frank, reappear to irritate the living and make life "hell" for all in the Labyrinth. From all appearances it would seem that we are again helpless witnesses to a film series that has begun to unfold (yep, there'll be a third installment called **HELLRAISER3: HELL ON EARTH** - oh joy! oh rapeful!). All my hopes that Clive Barker would do something original with the Cenobites were dashed as soon as Pinhead began to rant about their "God of the Labyrinth," which turns out to be some big-ass, rotating monolith that is referred to as Leviathan. I had imagined these creatures to be wondering demons - things that, on occasion, drop in on Earth whenever a cube is opened, and pick up some poor soul to play with. They weren't necessarily evil, just nasty and indifferent- strange and odd like Lovecraftian demons. Instead, the relationship between the Cenobites and their master is simplified. Barker linked their actions to hell. Not too bright, but simple enough for most of the heavy metal teens to groove too. A similarly ambiguous references to

religion also destroyed any hope of my liking NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3: DREAM WARRIORS. In the series' first film, Freddy Krueger was thought of as some kind of Hindu demon and therefore a foreign and intriguing figure. NIGHTMARE 3 went ahead and butchered this idea, bringing in some ridiculous Christian figurehead or icon (ie Freddy being the direct result of a nun being raped by a "thousand madmen"). Alas, HELLBOUND's hell is dull, boring and very conventional. I guess we should have expected as much from a half-baked rushed-in-production sequel. Kirsty is yet again involved with the Cenobites when a power-hungry doctor resuscitates Julia from a blood stained mattress (hey, wasn't the house originally destroyed in the first film?). The Cenobites are called back to Earth, and Kirsty, with a silent girlfriend in tow, get to visit them in their neighborhood, where she runs into her uncle Frank who is being tormented by a bunch of sheeted female forms just out of reach (some hell!). The Doctor gets to be a Cenobite, an interesting one with snake-like appendages (one of the better SFX in the film). We are introduced to Leviathan. Kirsty battles Julia. The little dumb girl speaks. All the Cenobites are turned back into human beings (thanks to Kirsty-one of the low, low points of the film!!!). The "bad" Cenobite is decapitated, and our two heroines return back to their own world where they walk arm in arm down a pretty garden path. Oh yeah, there's a twist ending for all you who weren't expecting one.

LIFEFORCE (1985, D: Tobe Hooper)

Yeah, this is the Tobe Hooper film most everyone in the industry booted off the screens in 1985. I, however, thought it was one heck of a weird-o flick. The film suffers from some major plot flaws, but it looks good. All of Tobe Hooper's films look good. He just has problems with continuity and control over his actors. In **LIFEFORCE** the latter problem had been solved when he scrounged up Steven Railsback, Peter Firth, Michael Gothard, and the ever-stimulating Mathilda May (who was "introduced" in this film and has since starred in some obscure Civil War film and possibly another European film effort-both titles escape me at the moment). But his editing, plot, and pacing still need lots of work. All in all, though, I thought the film was a blast. I couldn't stomach the Colin Wilson book from which this was based, because I found "The Space Vampires" dull and all too wordy. The film surpassed this obstacle well with some stunning SFX and a better than average film score by none other than Henry Mancini. **LIFEFORCE** could be seen as a cinematic metaphor for the AIDS epidemic (as in Carpenter's **THE THING**). The fatal "disease" is initially passed in one selected individual to another until it rages out of control to the point where the British government considers bombing London. It isn't far from the frightening reality that some people have dreamed up to deal with the AIDS epidemic. I doubt that Hooper really meant his work to be some AIDS allegory, but it sure works as one. The story is simple: on a fact-finding mission to probe Halley's Comet, an international shuttle craft is infected with intergalactic vampires (which resemble New York and/or London fashion models). Back on Earth, the female vampire (May) is busy contaminating people and rearing their soon-to-be-departed souls for a transfer to a mammoth space craft which is nestled within the tail of the comet. Apparently the vampire legend sprang from previous visits from these aliens who seem to drift along with the comet on a soul-collecting venture. Earth is eventually saved when the spaceship finally gathers enough energy, blasts off away from the comet, and goes shooting off into the interstellar void. Kiada sally but I've sat through this film at least seven times-and not just to ogle at Ms. May's physique (I must admit she fascinates me a great deal). It's a wild romp into the absurd, saved by the hi-fi stereo effects and Mancini's atypical scoring.

WAXWORKS (1988, D: Anthony Hickox)

What a miserable film to sit through. The ads and previews promised a film full of horrible monsters and nasty SFX. The result was pretty sorry. The story is bad, the direction is bad, the acting is-ugh-bad, and the "uncensored edition" special effects are bad (if you can find them). This is no more than a PG-13 film spiced up with two somewhat gory scenes. David Warner stars as an immortal waxworks owner that needs fresh, innocent souls to reincarnate evil ones from his Chamber of Horrors' wax figurines. As the poorly realized script stumbles and the cliché ridden plot dictates, a group of teenagers enter his House of Wax and are picked off one by one. Whenever a person steps over the cord separating the viewer from the waxwork "scene of horror" he or she is instantly transported into the frozen, now animated world of the wax figure. One girl gets seduced and bitten by a vampire, a boy gets munched by, then turns into a were-wolf (only to be shot by a waxwork werewolf hunter), and another is under the power of the Marquis De Sade. Uh-huh. Enter Patrick MacGee (in a hot-rod wheelchair) along with some skid-row monster bashers to save the day. The



film tries too damn hard to be one of those "longue-in-cheek" horror films. It's an embarrassment. I found only two scenes of gore which could have been the "uncensored" parts: a victim of the ghoulish vampires who has had his leg chewed to the bone, and an assistant that gets torn in half by a werewolf. In fact, the only parts of the film I did find mildly amusing were the cryptic references to old Universal and Hammer films, plus a b/w sequence where a kid is chased by some Romero-style zombies. Another high-hopes film shot down in a blaze of idiotic film-making.

CASE OF THE MUKKINESE BATTLEHORN

(1955, D: Joseph Sterling)
Before there was Monty Python's Flying Circus, Benny Hill, or Dave Allen, the English were treated to the equally nutty, off-beat, and downright weird humor of the Goon Show. A popular radio show during the 1950's and 60's, the Goon Show spawned two comic masterminds into the unprepared world: Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan. After listening to some of their chaotic programs (which used to air on Cleveland's WCLV) it's easy to understand how something as manic as Monty Python came into being. As far as I can make out, this was the only Goon Show film. If there are any others out there let me know. I'd love to see them. **MUKKINESE BATTLEHORN** is a rambling, send-up of Scotland Yard and those numerous police/detective dramas that seemed to pour endlessly out of Britain. Director Sterling less Sellers run amok in this production. His manic performance smothered any actor around him, save for the equally bent raving of Milligan. A rare Mukkinese Battlehorn is stolen from a local museum. That's about it for the plot. The film degenerates (like their radio shows) into simply dadaesque proportions. There is a lack of real visual cohesion here. It's as if they had their brains still switched into the radio mode. **MUKKINESE BATTLEHORN** is not a bad film but a good portion of the sight gags die miserable deaths underneath boos and hisses. That may very well have been the Goons' intentions.

GIRLFRIENDS (1978, D: Claudia Weill)

This film was a pleasant surprise for me. **GIRLFRIENDS** is Claudia Weill's honest film about a woman who is having a hard time adjusting to the real world when her roommate/best friend (Anita Skinner) gets married and moves out. Melanie Mayron has the role of the confused single woman looking for something in her life. She falls in love with her rabbi (Eli Wallach) which doesn't work out well when his wife steps in, and she then again encounters

a long-forgotten one night stand (Christopher Guest in an early role). My girlfriend Leslie was laughing throughout the entire film. Not that the film was hilarious mind you, but Leslie's a huge "something" fan, and this, bespectacled, chubby, pre-nose-job/dental-work Mayron had her in stitches. A warm and surprising film for all you sentimentalists out there.

CAME A HOT FRIDAY (1987, D: Ian Mune)

I caught this film on my cable station's BRAVO channel. I'm sure it's out on video somewhere. **CAME A HOT FRIDAY** is a New Zealand film about some horse track con men who try and swindle a betting shop's boss out of a shitload of cash. The film is a marvelous example of what is missing in almost all of the American comedies-humor. It's raw, bent, wicked, and well handled film almost brilliantly executed by director Ian Mune. The period of the film is post-WWII New Zealand, and the setting consists of muggy days and nights in run-down, pitiful towns that dot the fantastic scenery. Our boys (Philip Gordon and Peter Bland) believe they have found a ripe patsy with the town clown (Michael Lawrence), who proceeds to win a lot of cash for them from the town's crooked bossman (Don Selwyn). The problem is that the boss has caught on to their little game and is about to wipe them out as soon as he can get a hold of the two con artists. The film is otherwise populated by zany characters like "the Kid", the town looney who envies himself as some out-of-time Sergio Leone cowboy and the wife of the Bossman who has the hots for Bland. The explosive finale had me laughing outloud, something I hadn't done since I saw Eddy Murphy's RAW bit about shits and farts and **MONTY PYTHON'S MEAT:ING OF LIFE** years ago!

PRISON (1988, D: Rene Harlin)

This is one of those mutant Ghost Story films, which incorporates Spielberg SFX, and ham-fisted attempts at real frights with the luntheadness of any prison film. The result is a dumb flick that rambles about spouting stupid dialogue and lumbering into real dumb regions of bad plotting. Granted, the film has a nice polished look to it thanks to Rene Harlin's bright direction and the animated special effects, but the entire production is shamed by a hurried script and some incredibly cliched characters and incidents. The story revolves around freeing the spirit of a wrongly executed convict. The poltergeist-like ghost slaughters fellow convict and prison guards alike, a bit of logic that is lost to me. I could imagine the mean of ghost attacking the prison's guards (wrapping one of them up in barbed wire for example), but why does it pick on other convicts? By the end of the film the body count hits around twelve or so and the prison warden responsible for framing the ex-convict gets fried alive in his Oldsmobile. For a buck rental you may be entertained by this bit of spook-poop, but I'm glad I got to borrow a copy of it from a friend.

THE FERRYMAN (1986, D: John Irving)

I am not sure just when this Granada Television International episode of HAUNTED was originally made. Prism Entertainment didn't list a date. Since it starred a fairly young Jeremy Brett, who in 1985 began the popular Thames TV ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES series (an excellent series of faithful adaptations of the Doyle short stories), I would imagine "The Ferryman" came out in the early 80s. Anyway, this fifty-five minute long adaptation of the Kingsley Amis story reflects the usual British concern for quality TV programming. Though I can sit through a slew of blood and guts movies without as much as a flinch, I have a hard time dealing with Ghost Stories (see MONSTER #10). Maybe this is because I grew up just down the street from Oberlin cemetery (I could see the gravestones from my bedroom window, not to mention anything that might have moved out there) and my imagination, per usual, ran wild with ghosts and ghouls. So when I rented this video, I steadied myself for one ghostly shock after another. "The Ferryman" turned out to be just spooky, not terrifying. The ghost in the video is an entire hostel rather than the shambling chain-clanker which I thought it would be. That's a pleasant change from something like PRISON which is reviewed above. Brett stars as Sheridan Owens, a horror writer who has a long line of bestsellers based on his own ghostly dreams. On a "marriage-saving" trip into the elegant English countryside, Owens and his wife (Natasha Parry) get lost in a thunderstorm and take shelter at a cheerful hostel. Things get weird when the Inn itself is named after the one he features in his new book. The inhabitants are also very familiar to him. In his book, the ghost of a murderer returns to the Inn to repeat its acts of murder and Owens can't seem to stop his book from becoming a terrifying reality! An intelligent, well told tale from director John Irving, and teleplay veteran Julian Bond. A serious television spookfest which far-out classes the majority of the stuff they make for the silver screen!

LATE NIGHT EDITS

THE TERROR OF FRANKENSTEIN

THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN

THE SKULL

ISLAND OF TERROR

THIS ISLAND EARTH

THE TERROR OF FRANKENSTEIN

(1975, D: Calvin Floyd)

I caught these films on television just a few short weeks ago. Both are intriguing in their own interpretation of the Mary Shelley novel, though there is a clear artistic gap between them—not just a chronological one. **REVENGE**, the second Hammer Frankenstein film, was directed in 1958 by Terence Fisher and was a lavish, technicolor masterpiece (my favorite Frankenstein film next to the three Karloff classics). **TERROR** (aka **VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN**) was an Irish Production from 1977 and was more or less directed by Calvin Floyd. Fisher's eye was both on the visual and character development within the film, while Floyd's bland effort relies on one element that is, for me, the key factor in even sitting through this film. As far as I know, Floyd's adaptation of the Mary Shelley legend is the closest to the novel. The monster (played with neurotic nastiness by Per Oscarsson) isn't the typical cinematic brute, but a direct (almost word for word, scene-for-scene) visual interpretation of Shelley's tragic antagonist. It even resembles the author's account of the beast; her words translated onto the screen by way of make-up ("his yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost the same colour as the dim white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, (and) straight black lips."). Shelley's vision was hinted at in Fisher's curse (starting Christopher Lee) and in Universal's Frankenstein series though none of those creatures were as articulate or as physically close to Shelley's literate monster as it appeared in **TERROR**. The rest of Floyd's film isn't as precise. It suffers from being dull and insipid (granted, the novel from which it was adapted was dull but it was never insipid!) Floyd's camera work is effective in creating a romantic feel, but the near-to-dead acting talents (?) of Leon Vitali and Stacy Dornier crush the otherwise redeeming features of the film.

THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1958, D: Terence Fisher)

Fisher's second venture into the Frankenstein myth was by far his best. **REVENGE** is concerned with a more humane Baron Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) who escaped being executed (for the "murder" of his wife in **CURSE**) and starts up a practice in a small German Village. He is running a clinic for the poor but, of course, his monster-making day's aren't over. His ethical practices are somewhat questionable (he removes perfectly good limbs from patients for his patchwork creation!), but for the most part he is a kind and caring doctor, quite unlike the cold and indifferent scientist from the previous film. His monster isn't a haphazardly assembled thing, rather a creation to which the brain of his crippled assistant Karl (Michael Gwynn) would be transplanted. The operation is a success until Karl suffers a traumatic blow to his newly constructed skull and begins a horrid transformation into a twisted, cannibalistic monster. At the end of the film Frankenstein is beaten to death by a rabid mob only to be brought back to life in a new synthetic body (looking remarkably like the old) by his other assistant (Francis Matthews). The monster maker becomes one of his own monsters! A brilliant twist from authors Jimmy Sangster and H. Harford Jones.

THE SKULL (1965, D: Freddie Francis) **REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN** was only one of the old British fright flicks I saw last week, thanks to cable. Without a doubt it was the best. Freddie Francis' **THE SKULL** (1965) and the quasi-Quatermass tale **ISLAND OF TERROR** (1966) directed by Terence Fisher, were the others. Watching these films back to back it's possible to see the striking difference between two popular directors of British 1960's horror/science fiction. **THE SKULL** could have been a very spooky, intriguing film if it had been handled by Fisher. Francis has an awkward way of moving around a set and staging his actors. It borders on sheer directorial ambiguity. No



real terror has a chance to build when cheap camera angles and trash cinematic cliché are employed to manipulate the audience. Fisher has a style which, from the very beginning of the film, piques the interest of the viewer. Francis slashes and bashes his way into the plot. While not a worthless director he is certainly an extremely careless one. He has had high points, the mediocre **EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN** (1965) and 1967's **TORTURE GARDEN** (an early entry into the British horror anthology sweepstakes), but they are few and far between. The story concerns the skull of the Marquis De Sade. It eventually makes its way into the hands of Peter Cushing who plays a collector of bizarre demonology-related goods. Havok ensues. Does the skull have mystic power capable of causing people to kill (or kill themselves), or is it a psychological catalyst for some already deep-rooted psychosis? Francis doesn't make this point very clear. Instead he mucks the plot up, wasting the talents of both Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee.

ISLAND OF TERROR

(1966, D: Terence Fisher)
Fisher's **ISLAND OF TERROR** is a good science fiction film, though too reminiscent of a Val Guest Quatermass film for my tastes. However flawed by budget limitations the film may be, there is still that reliable Fisher flair which saves it from becoming ludicrous. An excellent bit of acting from Peter Cushing (yes-his again!) helps in the overall credibility of the situation. It would appear that something has gone seriously wrong at a cancer research lab and the results are blob-like, silicon based creatures with long bone-sucking tentacles. The SFX are a little lame and, by the looks of it, they could have done with a little help from British low budget monster king Les Bowie. They feed on calcium and multiply every six hours. It's up to Cushing to destroy them before they devour the world. It seems that Hammer was the only British studio to produce quality films on a regular basis. **THE SKULL** was one of America's first endeavors, and **ISLAND OF TERROR** was an independent production for Planet Films. Hammer had the power and the prestige. They had been around for twenty-odd years and could afford excellent production work. These smaller companies were dogs begging for scraps - sour scraps at that. But, with **ISLAND OF TERROR** and other non-Hammer entries like Halton Productions **FACE OF FU MANCHU** (1965) and Tigon's **BEAST IN THE CELLAR**, there proved to be some life in the old indie production world of exploitative British science fiction/horror films.

THIS ISLAND EARTH

(1955, D: Joseph Newman (uncredited: Jack Arnold))
I was taken aback when I saw that **THIS ISLAND EARTH** was on the boob-tube. The last time I knew of it playing in the Cleveland area was one fifteen years ago on Ch. 61's 12 o'clock Monster Movie show. I love this flick. Any film by Jack Arnold is worth watching. This flick, though credited to Newman, is a Jack Arnold film. He did wonders with **THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN** (1957), **HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL** (1956), **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** (1955) and **THE MOUSE THAT ROARED** (1965). For **THIS ISLAND EARTH**, one of the rare color SF films for large companies like Universal doted out cash, Arnold decided to pull out all the stops and give the jaded 50's SF audiences an intelligent space film. It begins a little slow: we are introduced to each character, and the aliens

themselves are revealed to be both good and bad. Our human protagonists are carted off to the planet Metaluna where their unique scientific brains are needed to win a war against the hated Zahgonian. Metaluna is beyond help as the planet begins to disintegrate under the constant bombardment of the Zahgonian's spaceship guided meteorites. The humans are carted back to Earth as the last of the Metalunian spacecrafts crashes and explodes in the Atlantic ocean. The film, based on Raymond F. Jones' popular novel, is one of the brightest in the 50s annals of SF, though Clifford Stein's SFX doesn't seem to reflect the bold statement of "2 1/2 YEARS IN THE MAKING" that was plastered to every poster and lobby card for this film. I consider his work for 1957's **MONOLITH MONSTERS** a much more amazing bit of special illusionary work. The brilliant Metaluna Mutant, which appeared in the film for a brief female endangerment scene, was a production gimmick to attract the bubble-gum crowd into the idle seas. The TV edit of the film was near perfect, though Ch. 55 (a "Family Station"???) must have had an ad every five minutes!!!! That's one of the hazards of catching these Late Night Edits!

OLDIES: KRONOS (1957, D: Kurt Newman) FIEND WITHOUT A FACE

(1958, D: Arthur Crabtree)
For a long time these two films, **KRONOS** and **FIEND WITHOUT A FACE**, were only available for \$9.95 each. A staggering amount of hard earned cash for some b/w film, right? Well, yes and no. Yes, if you look at a film that is in b/w as something that needs crayoning. No, if you're a rabid film buff that enjoys these films in their original state. Yes, again if you're on a limited budget like me!!! I was aching hard when I first saw **KRONOS** was released by Wade Williams for too much money. I wavered between buying this video and spending money for college text books. The times won out, and I went without seeing the best invasion film of all time for another few years until Nostalgia Merchants bought out Fox/Hill Video and released **KRONOS** for \$15. Not a Cheap Video, but a very affordable one. This same predicament was true for **FIEND WITHOUT A FACE** which is owned by Blackhawk Video through Republic Pictures and was originally offered to the public for a similarly high price. **KRONOS** was made in 1957 on a 'B' picture budget, and to think of what it could have looked like if it was given some 'A' picture funds makes my head spin. The film looks good, and the acting isn't all that bad either. The story by Irving Bloch, isn't one of your typical potboilers (neither were other films that this same SFX crew worked on such as the amazing 1956 **ATOMIC SUBMARINE**). It's fairly complex and involving. An alien force arrives on Earth and delivers a titanic tinkertoy robot to absorb all of the worlds energy. When Kronos (as the robot is dubbed by the scientists in the film) is through, it will leave an exhausted Earth and return to its makers' own energy-depleted world. This is a proto-ecological disaster/energy crisis film from the late 50s! The Irving Bloch, Gene Warren, Wah Chang, and Louis DeWitt SFX are kinda funky (cartoon animation is used in one sequence where Kronos is devouring a city). Nevertheless, given the funds available, **KRONOS: CONQUEROR OF THE UNIVERSE** is still the craziest and most literate SF film of that decade. The robot's design and its piston-like tripod locomotion was sheer brilliance. So, too, was the riveting Paul Sawtell soundtrack (which was later reused in the equally classic IT! **THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE** -- see page 17), which was once available a few years ago. The biggest flaw of the film's video transfer is that because it was originally a "Cinemascope" production a good 25% of the film's image is lost. This is definitely a film that suffers from not being released in the "letterbox" format.

Equally bizarre and fun to watch is the 1958 film **FIEND WITHOUT A FACE**, another low-budget, high-result film. The film starts out real slow, with the proposed monsters being invisible terrors. The creatures are the briseshild (literally!) of a good-natured scientist whose telepathic experiment goes awry, creating these cerebral suckers. All the b/w gore begins, though, when the local atomic powerplant is juiced up and the horrors become visible, resembling pulsating human brains complete with antennae and a long whip-like spinalcord/tail which it uses to push itself around. When the monsters are shot or otherwise mortally wounded, they squirt black jello and thrash about making a horrid mess. Luckily, the atomic plant is destroyed before the brains can get enough energy to breed (of course no one thought about the fallout from the devastated complex, but remember in the 50s atomic energy was our elixir, safe, and democratic friend!). The film was shot in Canada with the amazing stop-motion flying brains SFX being completed in West Germany. A damn fine film.



cheap!
video

Just about any videocamenger would have no qualms purchasing **CHEAP VIDEO**. They aren't things of wonder, but they are generally 'ery low cost and offer the collector the "pride" of ownership. That is to say, if they are worth owning! Most aren't. Let's face it **CHEAP VIDEOS** are cheap, next to worthless and sometimes downright dangerous for your VCR! However, there are some really interesting films available that only a fool would pass up considering the price. For this issue I had planned on doing short interviews with some of the companies involved with the CV industry. I intended to contact

GOODTIMES, but their "800" line was always busy. Then **VIKING VIDEO** said they would get back to me they didn't. **VID-AMERICA**, **CONGRESS VIDEO**, and **VIDEO TREASURES** didn't bother even answering me back. **STAR**, **KING**, and **CASTLE VIDEO** didn't even have addresses on their boxes (for obvious reasons: they are the cheapest of the cheap)!!!! So, instead of interviews, here's a number of their titles up for review. Good or bad, each will get a fair chance at proving themselves worthy of the title of **CHEAP VIDEO!**

DAY OF THE DEAD (1985, D: George Romero.)

I was shopping at the new Ames store just outside Oberlin when I came across the VIDEO section in their electronics department. It sat there at the very center of the department, squat and obscene like some rack full of dangerous and forbidden books. I flipped through the usual crap like the umpteenth editions of **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**, **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**, **ALICE SWEET ALICE**, and so forth until I discovered **DAY OF THE DEAD** under another video I was searching for (**ROGER RAMJET** Vol.2-see **ANIMATION** dept.). At first I gawked at the price: \$8.00. I thought it was the original MEDIA release which the store must have accidentally re-priced at half its original budget re-release price! Then I looked on the back: **VIDEO TREASURES**. It had the very same box design that the original MEDIA release had (and a slick box design it is!). I forked out the needed cash and got back to my car. I then slowly unwrapped my prize from its shrink-wrap, and slipped the cassette out of its cardboard casing. Oh shift! It was taped in LP mode. The dulling sensation of cheapvideotronics washed over me as I drove home with my "prize." That sickening feeling left as soon as I popped it in my machine and saw the brilliant theater illuminate my TV. VT did a decent job with it. Even in LP mode everything went smooth (the tracking, which is a problem that plagues almost all CV's, was no headache at all!). Now about the film itself. I will defend this third installment in Romero's "DEAD" series. It isn't what I had originally imagined the trilogy's climatic episode to be like, but then I guess Romero didn't either. From reading various sources, I take it the guy had problems with his producer and the original "one on one" zombie extermination force idea was dumped for something a bit more economical. The story concerns the plight of a group of humans basically trapped in an underground army installation. There they are fooling with the "dead" in order to discover if they can "domesticate" them. In the usual Romero fashion everything goes to pot (literally), and it is the "good-guys" (the pacifists and the zombies) against the "bad guys" (the army dudes). It's overly talky, but I didn't find that at all distracting from the film. There isn't much action until the last half hour, but I was satisfied with what I saw. The two "gut-spill" scenes are sure fire winners in any gore category. Even if you really didn't care for the film, you must admit it is one of the best post-**DAWN OF THE DEAD** films around.

THE MYSTERIANS (1957, D: Inoshiro Honda)

Of all the Toho films that have been released on Cheap Video this is the one I have been really waiting for. **THE MYSTERIANS** is my all time favorite 1950's Japanese giant monster import, next to **GODZILLA**, of course! What makes this film for me is the unusually high standard of colorful special effects that jump out at the viewer. This is what color films are all about. Just think of **THE MYSTERIANS** as the SF version of Michael Powell's **THE RED SHOES**. The rich technicolor blinds you—or at least it did when I used to watch this film on TV. The Star Classics copy is a bit washed out, leaving the originally bright bright reds and blues sort of pinkish. It doesn't help when Star Classics also records the feature at the four hour speed!! That's a staple with Cheap Video, though. Okay. The box design is excellent and took me by surprise! It features some production painting from the original film poster on the front, plus two of those wild, surrealistic Toho production stills on the back. You know what I mean, those bizarre stills where monsters are interspersed with humans, and roaring rockets complete with cartoon rays and explosions. The film itself is a bit less wild, though it still ranks as one of the best invasion films ever. At the beginning we get a taste of things to come as a giant Mysertian robot wreaks havoc, destroying a Japanese village in the process. Then we are introduced to the Mysertians—an all male race of aliens who want the Earth's female population to keep their alien seed from dying. Sexist, yeah, but ever entertaining and done with style when compared to, say, Larry Buchanan's **MARS NEEDS WOMEN**. What I really love about this film is the final confrontation between the Earth and the dome-dwelling

Mysertians. Later rays, titanic explosions, edge-of-your-seat tension and the best post-**GODZILLA** battle music ever to grace the screen. If only it was in stereo!!!! An 85 minute classic from the incomparable directorship of Inoshiro Honda.

HORROR OF THE ZOMBIES

(1974, D: Armando De Ossorio)

Boy, do I love these types of films. Good, pre-**DAWN OF THE DEAD** films. Most are total bullshit and usually follow the guidelines set by Romero's **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**, but not so Armando De Ossorio's "Temple Zombies" which are from the old school of horror (mixed with a dash of pore of course). As Cheap Video goes, this Ossorio flick, **HORROR OF THE ZOMBIES** (original title **EL BUQUE MALDITO**), was an excellent find for only \$7.95. Not only is the box design nicely done, but VidAmerica's "World's Worst Video" series has been unferred onto tape in the two hour mode, giving the buyer a crisp, non-problematic (tracking-wise) image. I was a bit disappointed to find that the WWW series offers only TV-edit prints!!!! Still, I enjoyed this second installment in Ossorio's Blind Dead series. The "zombies" in question are those fun-loving skeletal monks who are cursed to wander the Earth dispatching all foolish humans who disturb their sleep. These blood-thirsty boogers are from the "mummy" school of human stalking: slow and steady wins the chase! Because these creatures were blinded before they "died," they have to hunt people by sound. Nice touch and something that Ossorio utilizes for a few of the better scenes in the film. Next time you're confronted by a hoard of blind zombies on the clustered gally of a haunted Galleon, say not to whimper, stumble or otherwise let your presence be known to them! Remember, no matter how slow they are they do not tire, while you're fear alone saps the energy from your body! This time around the monks are aboard a mysterious Spanish Galleon that drifts off the shores of modern day Spain in its own sauna-like fog bank (sort of sounds like a Carpenter film, eh?). Of course, some dumb humans investigate this annoying anomaly and thus awaken the Blind Dead guys just in time for a snack! Even if the special effects in the film are incredibly lame (picture a foot long, match-stick galleon on fire, sinking in a bath tub) the monks themselves are scary enough to be some of my favorite reoccurring cinematic fiends. Watch for some early 70's Euro-fashion in this hopelessly dubbed film.



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SINISTER CINEMA:

This is the grand poobah of all speciality video catalogs for those of you searching for old SF/Horror/Film Noir/Sword and Saddle/Silent/Serials videos. See my lengthy interview for more details on SINISTER. Now let us look at some of the films they have to offer:

TERROR IS A MAN (1959, D: Gerry DeLeon)

(The video version I have of this delicious B/W opus has the alternative title of **BLOOD CREATURE**) Whatever you call it, **TIAM** is one of the first and best of the modern-day Island Horror films. It is not the first, just one of the best. This was also the first in the series of 'horrors on an island' films that producer/director Eddie Romero had something to do with. However basic, this film has nothing to do with the other 'Blood Island' productions he did later on in the 1960s, aside from being filmed in the Philippines and featuring a monster. **TIAM** sparkles from fine direction, decent acting (especially from Richard Deerr who reminds me of a young Joseph Cotten), reasonably intelligent dialogue, a tight soundtrack, and a monster that isn't half bad when you consider all of the other trash that came out the same year (or look to Romero's later efforts). It is a one-creature 'Island of Dr. Moreau', though this doctor isn't the sadistic madman that inhabited **THE ISLAND OF LOST SOULS**, but rather a surgeon with a unique vision of the 'perfect man.' He is in the process of turning a panther into a human being. His work is interrupted by (and his wife gets the hots for) the sole survivor of a ship-wreck off the rocky shores of the island. Eventually the pitiful creature escapes its creator and carries off the scientist's wife to protect her from a sex-crazed and sadistic assistant. Of course the scientist meets his doom at the very claws of the thing he created, and our hero plugs the monster with his trusty revolver. The creature, fatally wounded, stumbles onto the beach where it allows the little boy of the woman it killed earlier to help it into a boat and out to sea. When I was young and saw the film for the first time I had this firm belief that instead of the monster bleeding to death or dying of exposure, I imagined that it sailed off to some remote isle to live. I hate to see such a good monster perish in such a terrible manner—in a boat, surrounded by water and passing away scared and alone. I'm such a romantic at heart. Recommended viewing!

THE BRAINIAC (1961, D: Chano Urveta)

This is a monster flick that has to be seen and experienced! It's the only Mexican film of its kind which doesn't feature wrestling heroes. Nostadamus the vampire, werewolves or mummies—it's one of the good ones! The creature in question is the reincarnation of an evil baron who, because of some real nasty things he did in 1661, was burned at the stake, but not before he vowed vengeance upon the judges that had him torched. Three hundred years later a comet appears in the night sky, crashes to Earth, and delivers the **BRAINIAC**. This hairy, pointy-nosed, two-tentacle/clawed beastie sucks the brains out of whatever human he

SINISTER SECRETS

an interview with Greg Luce
of Sinister Cinema

conducted by Tim Paxton

VV: What are your most popular titles?

GL: Oh, I could give you about four or five films--**CARNIVAL OF SOULS**, **THE GHOUL**, **THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT**, **ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES**, and right now **BLACK SUNDAY** is doing very well for us.

VV: How did you decide which films to release on tape?

GL: Eighty percent of it is just watching **The Big Reel** magazine month after month and putting want ads in for the films you're looking for. **The Big Reel** is the bible of the 16mm and 35mm film collecting colony. *VV: Sort of like Goldmine magazine for film fanatics?*

GL: That's right! That's exactly right! Most of our stuff we get through **The Big Reel**. Also, I know people that are collectors and when they come across things they call me up and tell me when they find something. A lot of times you just blindly go searching for stuff. You call distributors. I found a guy over in Oakland that had a whole warehouse full of old 35mm prints! I couldn't believe it! Sometimes you can pick up some really oddball films on video cassette--some film collector had a copy made of a movie two years ago, the person who had the print wouldn't sell it to him, so maybe he had a video copy of it made and it's an almost pristine, broadcast quality video cassette. I'll actually do deals if the video cassette is of excellent quality. I don't like to do that. I always prefer a 16mm or a 35mm print. That's basically how we do it!

VV: You started out as a collector first?

GL: I started out as a collector of movies on video cassette. When video cassettes started getting cheaper and cheaper it seems like I started buying more and more. I don't know many film collectors so all I ever had in my film collection were things I was able to tape off of television. There were (and still are) all kinds of films that I had never seen that I always wondered about. You can only watch

encounters through the back of the next via a long and slimy tongue! When he's in human form (as the 'decadent' of the original Baron) he slurps down on a bowl of brains as if it was raspberry yogurt! Disgusting! Just as the monster is about to brain-suck one of the decedents of one of the original tribunal judges, he is blow-torched by a pair of smart-ass police detectives! The film is a bizarre combination of make-shift forests, cheap sets, and gigantic photos which are back drops for throat door scenes! Simply surrealistic! A must see for any lover of the strange!

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT

(1955, D: Val Gu. st.)

I can trace my fascination with British SFantasy back to this one film. While *INVASION* (1965) was nice, and the Frankenstein and Dracula films were cool, this first Quatermass film (based on the popular TV series—I would kill to see them!!!) gave me the chills and strengthened my respect of the genre (especially when compared to its pitiful American cousins of approximately the same time period—*THE BLOB*, etc.). The series (with *X-THE UNKNOWN* included) had an entire, satisfying "adult" feel. As a kid I wanted to be thrilled and I expected a tight and intelligent script. It seems a spaceship crashes back to Earth with all but one dazed astronaut turned into protoplasmic jelly. Pretty soon this poor guy becomes a monster that absorbs shape, mass and intelligence from all the organisms it comes in contact with. Only Quatermass can stop the creature! Just before the thing is about to "go to seed" it's electrocuted by the quick thinking Quatermass. Cheap but very effective SFX from the late Lester Bowie and the all round excellent cast under the tense direction of Val Guest makes this top notch British SF as it's most believable (What DR. WHO should have been!!!)

WILD WORLD OF BATWOMAN

(1966, D + Screenwriter: Jerry Warren)

I was surprised at *SINISTER* when I got around to watching their edition of this far-out, wacky flick. It appears to be a third generation TV-edit or something just as mediocre. The image isn't bad, it just "bends" occasionally and is at times a bit grainy. However, as with *ATTACK FROM SPACE*, this film is worth seeing not matter what condition it is in. It's a bad film, though certainly not unwatchable. It's a spoof of a spoof, cashing in on the *BATMAN* TV craze of the middle sixties. The lousy production work and wiggled-out costumes, sets, and non-directional touches remind me of a dear old Saturday afternoon favorite, Philip Kaufman's *FEARLESS FRANK* (a 1967 film I wouldn't mind having on video—anyone got it?). Rhino Video is releasing it soon as well, so if you're interested order it from either Rhino or Sinister.

MONSTER A GO-GO

(1965, D: Bill Rebane & Herschell G. Lewis)

BEAST WITH A MILLION EYES

(1955, D: David Kramarsky)

I gotta admit it—I like these two examples of non-film making at it's creative height. Both films are probably two of the slowest paced in history. Both are almost non-directional. Both rely on their monsters to tell the film, because God knows they didn't have anything else to offer! H. G. Lewis' masterpiece of time dilation, *MONSTER A GO GO*, is about a seven foot astronaut-cum-monster that walks around throughout the film apparently doing harm, though no evidence of its "deadly" powers are ever evident! To make matters worse the totally dead plot ends with the monster simply vanishing into thin air—huh? Did I miss something? The film doesn't even feature any of "THAT BIZARRE GORE THAT LEWIS IS FAMOUS FOR" as a CLEAR Video flyer advertizes. It's as dry as a two week old chicken carcass and just as enticing! *BEAST* is another matter altogether. At least director Kramarsky tries to get things rolling with a killer cow (I) and some suicidal crows. An alien force takes control of local animals in a desert community and turns them against a family of poor folk. In the end the physical alien host is destroyed along with its spaceship. The devil-bat alien was devised by Paul Blaisdell as his first attempt at a film monster for producer Roger Corman. Blaisdell had constructed the creature to be very agile—it could pick up objects and so forth. However most of those scenes were reduced to a pile on the editing room floor, and all we see of the monster is about ten seconds before Paul Birch blows it away with his trusty shotgun. An interesting pre-*OUTER LIMITS*-type tale left mangled by poor direction and shoddy production.

THE UNDYING MONSTER

(1942, D: John Brahm)

THE GHOUL (1933, D: T. Hayes Hunter)

Old monster flicks are important to see if a person wants to be well-rounded in the overall appreciation of the genre. However, not all old films are good ones. Sometimes there's a film you see "when young, then later remember 'remember' how good it was. I fell victim to my memory when I ordered *THE UNDYING MONSTER*, an English werewolf film from 1941. It isn't a crummy picture, but one which could have been a hell of a lot better! An English family is cursed by a Lycanthropic monster which bumps off family members one by one over several decades. Throw in a Scotland yard criminal investigator, his goofy but lovable female side-kick, lots of red herrings and an over-loud soundtrack and you have an English variation on the Universal horror films of the same period—but not quite as well executed. The film looks great, the acting is fair, and the 16mm transfer is excellent except for some very annoying splices that chop into very important dialogue at the wrong time. The same could also be said of the Boris Karloff vehicle *THE GHOUL*. This Sinister print is the English version, not the Czech edition that had some twelve minutes cut from it. The print is watchable, but it looks as if it is a copy of a PAL film transcribed in our NATC format. Not bad, just a bit grainy. The film is another one of the English variations on the Universal horror films or possibly a better comparison would be with the 1932 film *OLD DARK HOUSE*. It's sort of the same thing, with the exception that you don't have James Whale directing it! Karloff stars as an Egyptologist that dies and then returns to avenge the grave-robbing of a precious stone from his mausoleum. As Karloff films go it's pretty good, but clearly no *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* (1941) for sheer haunted house spookery. Worth owning, for both the historical reasons (early Karloff, restored-original version not seen on our shore in over fifty years) and just to see the King in top acting form.

HORROR HOTEL (1960, D: John Moxey)

This was one of the first films produced for Amicus, rival to Hammer Studios. *HORROR HOTEL* features a Hammer regular Chris Lee as Professor Delcoul, the head of a witch's coven in the Massachusetts village of Whitehead. He provides sacrifices for the coven in exchange for worshiping Satan and a two hundred year old witch (Patricia Jessel). The film is full of Lovecraftian atmosphere, but the lack of any Old Ones is a major disappointment to me (I still want to see a production of "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" which *HORROR HOTEL* reminds me of). Whatever, this is a witch film, and the climatic bit where Tom Naylor vanishes the entire coven with the shadow of a huge cross is nicely done. Co-writer George Bax also wrote the 1961 film *NIGHT OF THE EAGLE* (US title *BURN WITCH BURN*). Other cool witch films include: *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT* (1967), *THE BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW* (1970), Corman's *THE UNDEAD* (1956), and Michael Reeve's mind blowing *WITCHFINDER GENERAL* (1968, US title *THE CONQUEROR WORM*).

THE CRAWLING EYE

(1958, D: Quentin Lawrence)

In an earlier publication of mine (*PHOTO FIENDS* #3, 1980) I reviewed this film in a long, sprawling filmbook complete with photo after photo. This time around I'll just give you a brief blurb about this amazing British SF flick. The Brits have this thing about blobs in their film and TV. You have the Quatermass slimers, *X-THE UNKNOWN* (1956), and various other flicks. There are even blobular fiends on TV's *DR. WHO* (especially the excellent episode *THE HORROR OF FANG ROCK*). So, when you finally get the first good look at one of the tentacled, cyclopic blobs through a broken down door it isn't surprising to see something very interesting. The SFX are by Hammer veterans Les Bowie and the monsters are pretty good for the minuscule budget director Lawrence had to work with. Actor Forrest Tucker comes face to face (?) with some aliens that are hiding away in a radioactive cloud on the side of the Trollenberg mountain. In a fiery climax the monsters get fried as NATO jets plop napalm on them. A good, solid SF shocker.

THE HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS

(aka LES YEUX SANS VISAGE, 1959 D: George Franju)

For a film that came out at the end of the 1950s this film features some horrifying images that would feel more comfortable in, say, a Herschell Gordon Lewis production. However, this George Franju film is something a HGL film could never be: an excellent well-crafted film with intelligence and substance (says you! - Dave). The b/w gore comes from an operating room scene where the skin of a woman is surgically removed from her face (in a very realistic manner which had me squirming--and this coming from a hardcore DAWN OF THE DEAD fan!!), and when Alida Valli gets a scalpel plunged deep into her neck. The story concerns a French surgeon (Pierre Brasseur) who is constantly mutilating young women to supply his disfigured daughter (Edith Scob) with new faces. It seems that the newly attached skin tissues are rejected by Scob's system and we are witness to the flesh actually decaying on her face. Scob is bonkers, partially because of her disfigurement, but her father's constant grafting of skin onto her face, and the plastic mask she must wear certainly doesn't help. It's that mask which is the most frightening thing in the film. We see only her large lidless eyes forever staring out from behind the sad, soulless mask. It's clearly one of the best horror films ever, poetic and terrifying, maddening and saddening at the same time. A must for any foreign film lover. French with English subtitles.



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San Francisco, CA 94116

CHILLER THEATRE VIDEO
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SOMETHING WEIRD
c/o M. Varney
6317 11th Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98107

CLEAR VIDEO
c/o G.J. Goleas
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FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN so many times. I love it! A few years ago, though, I started hungering for zillions of titles that I had heard of all my life but had never seen. I called Kit Parker Films down in Monterey and talked to Kit, who I didn't really know at all at the time. Kit turned me onto a couple of these little movie collectors magazines like The Big Wheel, Movie Collectors' World, and stuff like that. I started taking ads out in these magazines and suddenly all these people from New York, Ohio, and Texas were calling me and writing me. I had this whole network of friends-video collectors-and we were trading back and forth. I started getting \$200 and \$300 phone bills every month and I was spending about \$200 a month on blank tape. It got to be a very expensive hobby! I eventually found out from someone--I didn't know anything about public domain--that a lot of these old movies that I liked so much, esp. the Monograms and the PRC's from the 30s and 40s, were in the public domain! So to help pay for this insanity, this hobby, I started taking out little, tiny 1/8 page ads in Movie Collectors World for about 15 to 20 titles. I got a few orders here and there and that helped pay for the hobby. Eventually what happened was it just spread and got bigger and bigger and bigger. When my wife got pregnant with our first son we knew that she was going to be out of work for about four or five months so I decided to put a little effort into it and make it bigger. It worked. Then I got affiliated with a television station that had a library of a thousand films on 3/4" broadcast cassettes and I got a ton of stuff from them. Finally, it just grew and grew out of what was basically a hobby and here we are today!

VV: What do you think of GOODTIMES VIDEO?

GL: I think their quality has improved a lot. Many people bitched for a long time because they were 4hr and 6hr speed. But when they started running their masters from one inch it doesn't matter whether you're in 6hr speed--it's still gonna look gorgeous! I think that they've come out with some interesting things and will probably continue to do so. VV: What about companies that are sitting on warehouses of great old b/w stuff and they won't let them go?

GL: The reason that they don't do it is because there's no money in it! Stop and think about this. SINISTER CINEMA - 95% of our stuff is public domain. We don't have to pay any royalties. I've got one full-time employee. My wife and I run the business. We've got a computer. We've got our film chain units and we've got a tremendous library. We're just a mom and pop company; we just try real hard. MCA, on the other hand, has to go through

PERIOD PIECES: KILL BABY KILL TERROR OF DR. HITCHCOCK BLACK SUNDAY CASTLE OF BLOOD



Sinister has a whole slew of these "period piece" horror flicks that were extremely popular worldwide in the sixties. In the US Roger Corman had his Poe series, in Mexico there were dozens of vampire flicks, and in Italy Mario Bava was responsible for the many Gothic and quasi-Gothic productions. Barbara Steele starred in tons of these imports, earning her the title of Scream Queen of the European horror cinema. She usually played some sort of bizarre, sexually-oriented vampire/ghost/whatever. Bava and his peers, Antonio Margheriti and Riccardo Freda (to name just two) practically fashioned atmospheric films around the beautiful and mysterious Steele. Eventually the genre began to rip itself off and everything ground to a halt by the time films like Hammer's FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL rolled out of the production gate in 1973. The hazards of watching period films: Dave sat through an entire week of 18th and 19th Century pics like LONG HAIR OF DEATH (1967), and CASTLE OF THE LIVING DEAD (1968) along with the films being reviewed below, and was unapproachable for days afterwards. "Each film seemed to blend into the next," he mumbled. "It was like a sitting through a week-long movie. It was very traumatic." So, if you're into watching these flicks, remember to intersperse them with other movies like THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT and TERROR IS A MAN to keep you from suffering the fate which Dave did. God bless him wherever he may be.

KILL BABY KILL (1966 D: Mario Bava)

Good God, this film impressed me! KILL BABY KILL (original title OPERAZIONE PAURA) is Mario Bava's Gothic masterpiece. Bava's sense of impending doom (only slightly hampered by the hammy dubbing job) is bolstered by his splendid ground-breaking use of color and the thick atmosphere of evil he creates. The most frightening scenes have to do with the surreal images of the sheepish townspeople looking out of windows in fear, and the leering face and threatening hand of the ghost who peered into the windows. The dead grey of the window panes in a sharp contrast with the brilliant technicolor used in the film. The two most bizarre scenes include Giacomo Rossi-Stuart's first encounter with the ghost of the seven-year-old girl who is driving the townspeople to suicide, and his time-dilated chase with himself through the same room over and over again. An amazing film which I had never heard of until Dave bought it from Sinister and we featured it on the premier of our cable TV movie programme LATE NIGHT VIDEO.

THE TERROR OF DR. HITCHCOCK

(1962, D: Riccardo Freda)

This Riccardo Freda film possesses one of the sickest plots in the history of horror. Dr. Hitchcock is a well-known European surgeon who is also a closet necrophiliac. When he isn't molesting dead women in the morgue he is at home shooting up his wife with a drug which reduces her to a near-

death-like coma, then he has his way with her (Woo boy!). They both be nuts: he to drug her into a paralysis, she to meekly accept this bizarre sexplay. (I guess that's 19th-century marriages for you.) However, he overdoes it one night and his wife never regains consciousness. He believes his wife dead, buries her, leaves the house for a few years to re-marry (to Barbara Steele) the returns. Unfortunately for Steele her husband's first wife isn't dead, and she doesn't like her husband's new bride. Freda: excellent director, especially when he has to work with plots as bizarre as this one. Well worth an addition to anyone's collection, especially since this is the British dubbed version of the original film (L'ORRIBILE SEGRETO DEL DR. HITCHCOCK) with extra footage. The dubbing is practically un-noticable—something I would love to see happen to most of the imported films released over here. Look for Freda's sequel THE GHOST (also available from Sinister) and watch both back to back for a real creepy double feature.

BLACK SUNDAY (1960, D: Mario Bava)

What can one say about this film except that it is one of the most chilling period pieces ever produced. I'd heard and read about this Mario Bava classic for years but I never got the chance to see it. When I finally sat down to watch this Barbara Steele film I was blown away. Nowadays there are truckloads of theatrical and direct-to-video gore films dumped on us yearly but take a gander at this 1960 gem and you will be amazed. All the new flicks pale in comparison with LA MASCHERA DEL DEMONIO (original title) brutal spiked mask and sledgehammer opening scene. OUCH!!! It's no wonder that this is one of the most popular "indie" video releases ever. Sinister offers us the English print which still has its original score. Buy it. Watch it. Marvel at it. It will change your life.

CASTLE OF BLOOD

(1964, D: Antonio Margheriti)

This Antonio Margheriti film (original title: LA DANZA MACABICA) is a favorite of mine which used to pop up all the time (along with it's color remake NELLA STRETTA MORSO DEL RAGNO aka WEB). THE SPIDER which starred Klaus Kinski) on one of Cleveland's five movie hosts, years ago. Barbara Steele stars as a ghost of a murdered woman who tries to save the life of a man trapped in a haunted castle. George Riviere is challenged to stay in a haunted house, his reward is a sum of cash. Unfortunately he loses his life just seconds before his friend would have been guaranteed with the sunrise, when the gate of the castle closes on his neck. A wonderfully spooky flick.





incredible amounts of beauracratie red tape just to get a film released, even their own product that they own the rights to. It costs them tens of thousands of dollars. Now I know for a fact that Universal took a bath on **SON OF DRACULA** - which is a *major* horror film from the 40s. That's because it's in black and white and people under the age of 25 don't even know who Clark Gable is let alone Lon Chaney, Jr. The prime buying and renting video market-place is made up of largely people under the age of 25. These people just aren't familiar with this old stuff and when they do see it they find it to be extremely tame when compared to today's standards. They want **RAMBO**. The average Joe Schmuckmore who walks into his video store wants **RAMBO**. He wants **THREE MEN AND A BABY**. He wants **FRIDAY THE 13TH PT. 75!** He does *not* want **SON OF DRACULA**. There's no profit in these old black and white films for a major company with major expenses! It's depressing!!

VV: *You're not kidding!*

GL: I could pirate the stuff but I don't. It's too bad that they're just sitting on the film and they are not making any money on them, but what can you do? The fact of the matter is if you own a car and it's sitting in your driveway but you don't drive it, does that give the right to somebody else who just walks along to drive in it? The answer is no!

CLEMENT AND ME

An interview with Kevin Clement of **CHILLER THEATRE VIDEO** conducted by Tim Paxton.

CHILLER THEATRE: What's up?

VV: *Well, for this up coming issue we're going to try for lots of interviews.*

KC: Thanks for the magazine, I liked it a lot. It's even "Printed in Oberlin where printing is cheap!"

VV: *Issue #11 is gonna be even better On the cover we're gonna feature a really neat SHE CREATURE photo...*

KC: OOOH!

VV: *We have this nice photograph where she's peaking into the back of the car...*

KC: Oh yea, that's where she's gonna throw them off the cliff! Did you like the movie?

VV: *Loved it, Good pri u.*

KC: Glad you liked it.

VV: *I'm a big Paid Blaisdell fan*

KC: I've got so much of that stuff. I probably have all his stuff, you know.

VV: *We used to do a lot of letter writing a few years back before he died.*

KC: A friend of mine is friends with his friend...



VV: *Bob Burns?*

KC: Bob Burns, yep. Supposedly Bob Burns has this real museum-type thing in his house with all monsters set-up and stuff. I'd love to see that!

VV: *Do you have IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE? Is it from 16mm?*

KC: That was off TV. About maybe four years ago. They played it on TBS. It's never been around since the 60s, that's the only place I've seen it.

VV: *They used to show it in the Cleveland area (on Super Host) until about ten years ago.*

KC: What happened is when ALIEN came out they had some kind of contract that they couldn't release IT! on video tape or show it on TV because of the similarities between IT! and ALIEN.

VV: *Yea, when ALIEN came out I talked to Jerome Bixby, the screenwriter of IT!, and he was talking about a lawsuit. I have no idea whatever happened to that.*

KC: They probably gave him money! That's probably why they can't release the film.

VV: *I hear IT! may be coming out on video soon...*

KC: Everything will eventually come out. I wish it would and then I could get a nice box for IT!

VV: *Do you have CURSE OF THE FACELESS MAN?*

KC: Oh yea, Edward L. Cahn! I think I have every film that he did as far as horror goes. A friend of mine works for Troma and he saw my listings on Edward L. Cahn films and he was amazed. "Every single one is there!" he said. I have CREATURE WITH THE ATOM BRAIN...

VV: *Do you know the Roky Erickson song "Creature with the Atom Brain"?*

KC: I have the 45 of it. He also did BURN THE FLAMES on the RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD soundtrack. He's something else! I think he's actually been in and out of psychiatric hospitals for a while. I've got videos on THE 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS.

VV: *Man...*

KC: I got them on WHERE THE ACTION IS, and I've got a clip of them from AMERICAN BANDSTAND for Halloween. They do their song "YOU'RE GONNA MISS ME BABY." You know, the one with the scream: "AAAAAHHHH You're gonna miss me, baby." Pretty raw. Pretty good. VV: *How did you get around to building up your collection?*

KC: I just started buying tapes six years ago...actually, it's been longer, but it has been heavy duty collecting since about six years ago. And I would just trade. Then I



started getting in touch with people across the country looking for tapes I wanted...and visa versa! This is my hobby actually.

Unfortunately when it gets to the point where it is going to be a "business" I'm going to stop doing it.

VV: *It's not quite as fun then.*

KC: No. What happens is that after you watch a movie for ten times, you know, like, within a week's period you get tired of it.

VV: *So you make direct film to video transfers?*

KC: Sometimes. Basically, if a friend of mine will do a film chain from 16mm I'll have a master copy of that. If I get something off of TV that's pretty rare I'll basically do it off my main copy. If it's something I took off TV I'll sit there and watch the thing and take out all the commercials. You know, it's fun that way. Then again if I put something like that out on the list and people want it then I'd end up editing out commercials from the same movie around thirty times! It's like UUUURGH!

VV: *What are the more popular titles?*

KC: Gee, that's hard to say. Probably the most popular stuff are any of the Corman monster pictures, and BLACK SUNDAY. Everybody has this thing about BLACK SUNDAY. It sort of gave you an impressionable memory when you were a kid. You're used to seeing these men in rubber suits, and all of a sudden this film comes out and you see this girl get a spiked mask put on her face and hit with a sledgehammer. It sort of leaves an impact on you! It was really different from what was going around at the time.

VV: *I see you also have a favorite of mine: ATTACK FROM SPACE. One of those Japanese "Starman" films. Was that a serial or what? Is your copy of ENEMY FROM SPACE the English version or the American?*

KC: Starman was a TV show. They would take about four shows and edit them together for a movie. QUATERMASS II? That's the English version. I don't think there's an American version. From what I've heard Brian Donlevy hated that film so much because nobody took him seriously as an actor, and because of those films, he bought up every American print he could get his hands on! He bought every known print in America which is really weird! He just didn't like that film at all.

VV: *I've a Karloff buff, and I've been looking for his THE DEVIL.*

COMMANDS.

KC: Oh phoeey! I don't have it. It's a Columbia movie. That's the type of film I'm not actually looking for, but if somebody brings it up I'll say, yea I want it!

CHILLER THEATRE VIDEO:

Mr. Kevin Clement at CHILLER THEATRE was my easiest interview to date. Simply, the guy liked a great deal of the stuff I'm into - THE 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS and EDWARD L. CAHN films. Check out the interview with him alongside this article. The CHILLER THEATRE videos are TV edits and/or 16mm film-chain transfers. The only gripe I have is that the sound quality on the TV-edits Dave and I have are a bit hissy and recorded at low volume. However, at least in my opinion, all the films I have are visually impressive given the material he had to work with.

THE SHE CREATURE

(1956, D: Edward L. Cahn)

What can I say? This is one of my top three Paul Blaisdell monster flicks, and it's in my top twenty movies of all time. The film just reeks of cheesy production, wooden acting, and your typical, though still lovable, "pedestrian" direction from dear of Edward L. Cahn. Cahn was one of the most prolific SF/Horror film directors of the 1950s. (Did he also direct some of Columbia's OUR GANG episodes? Someone out there help me!) At last count I managed to come up with about eleven films including gems like CREATURE WITH THE ATOM BRAIN, IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE (see below), VOOODOO WOMAN, CURSE OF THE FACELESS MAN and THE SHE CREATURE. I'm not too sure if he was ever comfortable working on monster flicks, but he at least gave the audience a good eyeful of the beasts when they did show up (none of this lurking in the shadows bullshit so loved by today's directors). Sure, the suits for some of the films were a little odd looking (the late Paul Blaisdell was a genius when it came to creating original-looking monsters while meeting a tight budget and a restricted shooting schedule; they functioned well under stress), but Cahn had them out front and terrorizing the cast every chance they could. THE SHE CREATURE was no exception to the rule. The story has a mad hypnotist, Stromboli, using his female assistant, the buxom Maria English, to call forth her amphibian "ancestor" who then murders whomever the Master sees fit. In a great scene the creature materializes outside a car, peers through it's back window and then catapults it over a cliff. Love it! In the end love wins out when Stromboli tries to force the She Creature into wasting English's lover, only to have the monster turn on him instead. With its master dead the creature strolls down to the beach and dissolves into ectoplasm never to be seen again. Blaisdell once told me we was against adding breasts and "vulgar seaweed hair" to the monster, nevertheless the film's producer insisted that "Linda Carter's best measurements" had to be added to the suit. Still, the monster is one of horror's most original and best. The 16mm film transfer is the best I've seen yet from an otherwise nice SINISTER CINEMA/LOONIC VIDEO video purchase. A fantastic addition to anyone's collection.

IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE

(1958, D: Edward L. Cahn)

Here it is folks, the film (along with Bava's PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES) which influenced the creators of the 1979 mega-hit ALIEN. It's all here: the alien that sneaks aboard, the air-shaft scenes, the unstoppable monster tearing through held after hold to get to his next meal, and total sense of claustrophobia all done on a neatly packed shoe-string budget! The Blaisdell martian, though obviously a man in a rubber suit, still strikes a sense of thrill when I see it claw its way through hatches, drag half-dead men around for occasional snacking, and during the climactic battle scene, where our surviving heroes don their space suits and have all the skin sucked out of the control room, exposing the alien to the ravishes of vacuum and killing it. The spaceship looks like WWII surplus pieced together, but then that probably what a spaceship would have looked like if it had been launched from Earth in 1958. (Though the story is set in the middle of the 1980s according to the original script I have). The otherwise wooden direction of Edward L. Cahn shines through the use of Jerome Bixby's (CURSE OF THE FACELESS MAN, THE LOST MISSILE, and a TWILIGHT ZONE and STAR TREK episode) excellent script. The film still holds up rather well after thirty-one years! All in all (even though it was a TV-print), this video is one of my most prized possessions, and should be one of yours as well!

ATTACK FROM SPACE

(1956-1959, Directors: Tervio Ishii, Akira Mitsuwa, Koreyoshi Akasaka)

A minor disappointment from CHILLER THEATRE. This is apparently a TV print of one of those amazing Japanese STARMAN films three or four generations removed. The fuzziness of the print brings back memories of when I used to sit and watch equally unclear UHF signals carrying the film on Ch. 43's HORROR HOST MAD THEATRE or SIR GRAVES GHASTLY. Still, as with CLEAR'S THE TWONKY, the video, no matter the quality, jogs that nostalgia part of your brain and you too with delight at the super-silly antics of one of Japan's early TV super heroes. This is live action fun via very cheap special effects (two of my favorites being his ability to jump four stories up a building backwards and throwing bad guys for incredible distances with the aid of clearly visible wires!) and strange LSD-inspired aliens. In this film version of the TV show Starman, the Man of Metal is sent to Earth to stop the Superions from conquering Earth with a new rocket. After totally wrecking various spaceships, secret hide-aways and so forth, Starman rides the galaxy of yet another foe of the forces of Goodness. They don't make films or TV like this anymore--such a pity!

VV: Does the TINGLER have the color sequence in it? How about RIOT ON SUNSET STRIP?

KC: Oh yea. It has the complete introduction with William Castle and the colour sequence. And RIOT I got off TV about maybe five years ago, so the original master is starting to deteriorate a little. But it's still pretty cool to see Mimsy Farmer do her drug dance. It's a riot. She's a goof. *VV: THE 8TH MAN. You have those four titles? I found the SERGEANT MERGATROID episode on a STAR CLASSICS tape for something like \$2.99...*

KC: Yeah, they put that on a cheapie cassette. I don't think they track very well 'cause everyone of those I've seen had a 'defective' sticker on them! They probably put them on a 50¢ tape. Basically, THE 8TH MAN and ASTRO BOY are in the order they appear in the listing. One ASTRO BOY has ASTRO BOY'S ORIGINS, COLLISION WITH MEDUSA, BEMO and then the other tape has JETO, THE VAMPIRE, and two others.

VV: What HI-GRADE tapes do you usually use?

KC: Most of the time it's Maxcell Gold, a Maxcell Gold Hi-Fi, and every once in a while a Fuji Gold or a Scotch High Grade.

VV: One last film: THE COLOSSUS OF NEW YORK.

KC: That's a TV print. I had a 16mm film chain of it, but it was lousy. The person that did it didn't know how to film chain. Film chain is when they shoot it off of 16mm screen and convert it to video tape. Usually when you take it off of video tape you will get perfect quality, but if you don't know what you're doing you'll get a lot of flicker and it'll look bad.

VV: THE SHE CREATURE flickered about for about ten seconds here and there, but other than that it was an impressive print.

KC: Yeah, that was probably just sprockets.

VV: Well, it was an old print. Like those 16mm films they showed in High School science classes!

KC: A lot of people don't understand when you have a print that old that sometimes the sprockets get worn and you get a frame jump for a second. But anybody who's into films should know what that is.

VV: Sure, and for a \$20 SHE

CREATURE, you can't complain! Thanks for the interview. I'll send you a copy of #11 when it comes out.

KC: That'll be neat.

END!

CLEAR VIDEO:

I didn't get an interview out of Clear Video that was suitable to print. CLEAR is a good place to order films that aren't offered in, say, a LOONIC VIDEO or SINISTER CINEMA catalog. Primarily this is because CLEAR offers TV prints or 16mm film-chain transfers of movies which may or may not be in public domain. The biggest hassle, though, when dealing with these "grey" market videos is that you might get a print that you feel was worth your twenty bucks. LOONIC, SINISTER, ADMIT ONE, and other "legitimate" companies rarely offer TV edits, preferring direct-to-video copies. Now, because of the unquestionable ownership of such films as SHE CREATURE or MAN FROM PLANET X, the only place to obtain these films is from companies such as CLEAR or CHILLER THEATRE. CLEAR offered some tasty bits of "lost-to-TV" celluloid that I couldn't pass up—even when the quality was less than expected.

THE MAN FROM PLANET X

(1951, D: Edgar G. Ulmer)

I was a little disappointed with my first purchase from CLEAR. It looks pretty washed out and blurry at times. Maybe the original 16mm print was struck off an old negative or something. Fortunately, there is no "flickering," which is usually found on shoddy film-chained videos. Now, this Edgar G. Ulmer production, though cheap in production and questionable in the acting abilities of the cast (including Patty Duke's TV dad, Raymond Bond, and Sally Field's real life momma Margaret Field), sells six-high for me. As with Blaisdell's INVASION OF THE SAUCEMEN six years later, the monster is a little guy. A big-headed, slugy-eyed creature which zaps people with hypnotic rays. The alien lands on a Scottish moor prior to his planet's too-close-for comfort pass to our own. He is the spearhead of a possible invasion fleet, but luckily, the local army outfit is contacted and they demolish his "dining hall" spaceship with a well aimed bazooka shell. It's a simple, pulpy tale, but the entire film has a murky atmosphere that I loved. MFXX achieves oh so very much for so very little! Small, compact, and very good! A must for any serious BEMaholic!

JACK THE GIANT KILLER

(1962, D: Nathan Juran)

This print is a bit smeared and is probably a third generation copy of an excellent second generation copy. The colour is nice, and it's good to see something like this available. I enjoyed watching this film, having heard so much about it during my childhood musings through finger-geared copies of FAMOUS MONSTERS. See the ANIMATION dept. in this issue for more on this crude, but nevertheless entertaining fantasy film.

THE TWONKY

(1953, D + Screenwriter + Producer: Arch Oboler)

This was the biggest disappointment of any of my purchases from CLEAR. I had waited years to see this Arch (THE MAZE, FIVE, THE INCREDIBLE INVASION, LIGHTS OUT-radio/record) Oboler film intact. The film made a great impression on me as a kid as I watched the galloping TV set make Hans Conrad's life a living, totalitarian hell. But, I was stunned to find the beginning credits all but cut off! Then, throughout my copy (which was a slightly fuzzy, second-generation copy from a TV-edit) there were numerous "stretch"-induced drop-outs which definitely transferred over from the original. The video stabilized after the first half hour, and I was able to sit back and watch it with zeal until the very ending! AAAAGH!! The ending was practically unwatchable due to an intense field of drop-outs and an abrupt cut off. I was pretty pissed to say the least!!! The film was worth watching though. The plot is similar to something Oboler would have had on his LIGHTS OUT program. A college professor is troubled by his TV set because he feels that it is controlling his life. That might not sound like much of a tale, considering many of us may feel that way, but this guy's TV scuttles around the house and keeps him from doing anything that may run afoul of its particular set of orders. He cannot have more than one cup of coffee in the morning (the thing will blast the offending cup of brew out of his hand with a well aimed laser burst), he cannot enjoy listening to Mozart (the "robot" proceeds to demolish all of Conrad's classical record collection in favor of marching band music which it puts on and proceeds to prance about the house), and when it feels the "master" is getting lonely it repeatedly attempts to order a "female" for him through the telephone via the local operator (and incurs the wrath of the local vice squad). If this isn't enough, Conrad can't seem to get away from the thing as it follows him around protecting him from anything he may do



which it perceives as self-destruction. The creature also keeps anyone from disconnecting it as well by the use of a mind-control ray. THE TWONKY (named by a really odd football coach of this fictional college—a Twonky is a mechanical toy or device which has been "invaded" by an "evil" spirit) soon has Conrad reciting trashy love novels during his lectures, instead of philosophical notes on independent thought! In the end he does manage to destroy the Twonky by sheer luck. For his pains he ends up in hospital, away from the curse of television until you guessed it—his wife gives him another set to keep him company while he is recovering! I am giving this film a great deal more coverage than others simply because I feel that it's one of those lost gems from early 1950's science fiction. The entire "Big Brother" relationship with the robot reeks of the Cold War, and astonishingly echoes Hollywood's fear of the up and coming television age. I'm not sure if this poor quality copy was worth \$20, but I was grateful to be able to glimpse some of it again, after all of these years.

LOONIC VIDEO:

For anybody interested in what LOONIC VIDEO has to offer check your copy of VIDEO*VOICE #9 for an interview with Lorry Ringuette plus some views of videos LOONIC has to offer. If you don't have #9 shame on you! It's still available through us for \$3.00 (ppd).



VIKING VIDEO CLASSICS:

Viking Video is one of the most schizoid Cheap Video companies around. They offer some of the best stuff for less, but their quality ranges from incredibly bad (mepit EP recordings) to very good (almost Blackhawk quality SP material). They offer you some of the usual films most everyone has in their catalogs: **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**, **AFRICA**, **SCREAMS**, **W.C. FIELDS SHORTS**, **THE TERROR** (featuring a circa 30s short of a young Karloff on the cover!!!!), etc. Then you have wild finds like these:

CREATURE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA

(1961, D: Roger Corman)

Yikes! Here's a ridiculous feature for all you Roger Corman completists out there—a dumb send up, both of the Cuban revolution and some of his own films like his **MONSTER FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR** (1954). **CREATURE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA** is a "hip" film full of gangsters, revolutionaries, stupid humor, and one of the most low-budget monsters ever to hit the screen! The box design is a good one (as are most Viking covers) featuring original poster art for the cover and the real running time (not just "approx. 90 minutes" that most Cheap Video companies stamp on their boxes). The biggest gripe about this find was both the price and the transfer. I paid \$9.00 for an EP recorded video! The master was flawless, but the transfer is only as good as an EP dub can get!

WHITE ZOMBIE (1933, D: Victor Halperin)

One of the all time classics, and in my opinion Bela Lugosi's best! Viking's LP transfer is from a slightly more copy, but as far as I know this is the only uncult edition offered by people other than Sinister Cinema. Though the film is directed without any flair by Victor Halperin, **WHITE ZOMBIE** does succeed on a absurd level. Bela Lugosi gives his most flamboyant portrayal ever as the movie's bad-guy Zombie maver. This was an excellent buy for only \$5 at the local Woolworth.

SILENT SHOCKERS:

When Blackhawk Video had their clearance sale I was short on funds and could only afford an excellent copy of Max Shreck's **NOSEFERATU**. I thought I would be without a near mint copy of those other silent horror classics I yearned for. Viking is the only company other than Sinister that releases good copies of silent films on video and for only \$5.00 a shot (though Sinister's list of Lon Chaney flicks struck me dumb. Their prints are as mint as you can get nowadays, they run \$15.95 a shot). Their **HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME**

(1923) is the Lon Chaney/Wallace Worsley monstrosity which is visually stunning, but lacks the delicious complexity of the 1939 Charles Laughton edition. Nevertheless, Viking's SP transfer, though not as good as a Blackhawk copy, is better than any other Cheap Video around! It features a pleasant soundtrack with music and sound effects. The next two flicks, though, have no soundtracks and will be a test of endurance—unless you have some exciting Baroque CD to pop into the stereo as you watch. The John Barrymore **DR. JECKILL AND MR. HYDE** (1924) Featuring an excellent box design this is the full 83 minute version, not the edited one I happened across years ago at Oberlin's local Public Library. The film itself is a decent LP transfer from a print that looks like it was struck from a reputable negative. This **HYDE** is a good adaptation, but clearly doesn't hold up too well when compared to my favorite 1941 Spencer Tracy version (though Barrymore's hammy transformation into Hyde does send a chill or two up my spine). Viking's **PHANTOM OF THE OPERA** (1925, 107 minutes) is an equally impressive transfer, especially the "Red Death" masquerade ball scene where the red is almost as brilliant as you would like it to be. This is also another LP recording.

RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON Vols 1-3,

(1951) I reported on this series back in VV49. I complained that I couldn't locate more than two. Eventually I had to order the other directly from Viking. The crazy Lydecker Brothers' special effects plague each chapter as Commander Cook battles the evil moon men and their menacing death ray. Hot stuff to while away the time. Here's an odd note: volume one and two were recorded in the LP mode while the third installment is in SP! In the end, the entire 12 chapter serial cost me \$17—not bad.

DICK TRACY MEETS GRUESOME

(1947, D: John Rawlins) This film is another SP-recorded Viking Video which looks great. The film itself is your basic Dick Tracy silliness, nevertheless anything with Karloff in it makes it a must for me! Through his sheer dynamic appearance Boris steals every scene from Ralph Byrd's Tracy! Karloff is cast as Gruesome, an ex-con that uses nerve gas to rob banks. John Rawlins' direction gives this short film (65 minutes!) an

THE GORGON PETRIFIES THE SCREEN WITH HORROR!



PETER CUSHING CHRISTOPHER LEE with RICHARD PASSO MICHAEL GOODLIFE BARBARA SHALLEY
Screenplay by JERON GALLING Based on an original story by L. L. LEWIS and D. W. BREWSTER. Produced by ANTHONY NELSON KEYS
Directed by TERENCE FISHER. A HAMMER FILM PRODUCTION. A COLUMBIA PICTURES RELEASE

THE GORGON (1964, D: Terence Fisher)

Next to **REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN** (see page 8), **THE GORGON** is my favorite Hammer horror film (though nothing can touch the studio's **Quatermass** series - see page 12). It is a very slick English period piece (a very popular horror sub-genre from the early to mid 60's). England cornered the gothic horror market with director Terence Fisher and the deadly duo of Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. **THE GORGON** is an excellent example of what the studio could produce when they put bucks and brains behind a movie. The film is chock full of fantastic frights, dynamic direction, moody music, barren sets, and a cast of professionals. It's the bizarre tale of a displaced Greek monster who decides to reside in a run down Barovian castle. The creature is Megara, one of three Gorgons which, by a baleful glance, could turn a human into stone. The creature takes on human form, possessing the visage of a beautiful lab assistant. This Cushing and Lee vehicle is definitely one of their best. For a switch, Cushing plays a no-good, village doctor who is covering up the fact that people are being petrified, and Lee (in more or less a cameo role) is the good guy, a scientist who suspects just what may be going on. Terence Fisher is in top form, utilizing the chills and utilizing quirky camera effects, keeping the special effects to their barest minimum, keeping us on the edge of reality (though the scene of the decapitated monster's head bouncing down the stairs borders on silly). An excellent Cheap Video find with a half decent transfer (LP mode) I must admit though that the GORGON's box design is the most mamee yet! Over-look this detail and purchase the film as soon as possible because Goodtimes lost their license and they're not making anymore

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN

(1956, D: Jack Pollexfen)

This is probably the cheapest Cheap Video ever! I found it for \$2.99 at a local Fisher-Big Wheel. When I popped it into the machine, I waited for about three minutes for this Jack Pollexfen film to begin. I waited and waited. Finally I fast forwarded it all the way to the end of the tape. There wasn't anything on the fucking cassette!!! The ultimate drag. I guess I'll have to shell out \$15.95 and get it from LOONIC or SINISTER (see page 11) to the damn thing!!!! Don't buy "Movie Favorites" videos. Ever!!!

almost serial feel. I wonder why it wasn't serialized in the first place? There's a nice twist ending where Tracy actually saves Grouseman from a fiery death (something Chester Gould's comic-strip character rarely did, preferring, in turn, to tomy-gun the villain down in his or her tracks!).

If you're interesting in obtaining a catalog from VIKING, they'll send you one on request. The address is: **VIKING ENTERTAINMENT INC., 4520 Valerio Street, Burbank, CA 91505**. VIKING's videos haven't given me any real problems other than the odd mistaking here and there and I would recommend them. Probably the best buy next to companies like Loonic, Sinister or Admit One.

THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD

(1971 D: Peter Duffell)

The box design to this Cheap Video comes from the film's original poster (you know the one, it was featured on the cover of FAMOUS MONSTERS #86) where Peter Cushing's head rests in a puddle of gore, served on a silver platter by a skeletal waxwork woman. This all star, PG, Amicus flick is sure to keep any lover of the 70s British anthology film entertained. Besides Cushing there's Chris Lee, Ingrid Pitt, Denholm Elliott, and Jon (DR. WHO's third "Doctor") Pertwee. Is the mysterious house of Charles Hillyer causing the death of all those who enter? Detective Holloway flips through the voluminous files on the victims and thus the Robert Bloch-penned stories unfold. Cushing loses his head over a waxwork figure. Lee gets tortured by his late wife's daughter. Elliott, a writer, is haunted by one of his own "horror story" creations. Finally Pertwee, a horror actor, dons a real vampire cape and turns into a...well, let's just say Ingrid Pitt isn't into hickies!! Not the best of anthologies when compared to THE VAULT OF HORROR or TALES FROM THE CRYPT, but for a SP-recorded, nicely packed, Cheap Video, it was a pretty fine addition to my collection.

SECRET CINEMA / NAUGHTY NURSE

(1966/69 D: Paul Bartel).

Have a secret paranoia? A secret perversion? Well, indie producer/director Bartel has a whole shitload of them! Watch his better known movies: EATING RAOUL, DEATHREACH 2000, and LUST IN THE DUST, then buy up this double feature containing his first two film shorts made in the 60s. The video opens with Bartel giving an entertaining, albeit long, introduction to SECRET CINEMA and NAUGHTY NURSE. I enjoyed learning how he had film-looped scenes "like in Italian movies" to dub the actors' voices. Low budget movie making made easy? SECRET CINEMA is a tale about a woman who has her life being documented by the mysterious "Secret Cinema." Paranoia builds to the point where she finally cracks-up and her "life story" ends with her being strapped into a straight-jacket! NAUGHTY NURSE is vintage Bartel, complete with a dominatrix, leather, rubber bands, and a gassy hotel room. Eight minutes

of sheer exploitive goofing around. An excellent "twist" ending! Transfer speed: SP. Transfer quality: excellent.

MAD WEDNESDAY

(aka THE SIN OF HAROLD DIDDLEBOCK, 1947, D: Preston Sturges).

This surprisingly excellent GOODTIMES print (transfered at SP model) is of a film I had been looking for for years. Harold Lloyd is now probably the least remembered of the silent screen's comedians. Back in his heyday he was right up there with Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton (even after a near fatal disaster with a stick of TNT-it was supposed to be a "dud" blew off most of Lloyd's right hand) as a comic genius. Unfortunately, as with all but Chaplin, and Laurel and Hardy (my least favorite silent or sound comedy team-next to the Ritz Brothers) Lloyd was more or less sent out to pasture until 1947 when Director/Writer/Producer Preston Sturges teamed up with Howard Hughes for the release of THE SIN OF HAROLD DIDDLEBOCK, Lloyd's "comeback" film. Well, he sort of came back. Due to some artistic bickering between Sturges and Hughes, the film received only a spotty release and was soon shelved. Hughes later re-released the film as MAD WEDNESDAY in a 70-minute edited format sometime in the 1950s. From what I can tell, this is the full, unedited version with the odd second film. The film is an indirect sequel to Lloyd's classic silent THE FRESHMAN (1923), a nutty football film. Years later Harold Diddlebock, ex-sports hero, is a bitter and dejected accountant who has failed in life. Just when everything is about to go to hell, he gets drunk off his ass and turns his life around through a series of bizarre misadventures. A fun, close-to-excellent, screwball film that was made a little too late to cash in on the popularity of other similar comedies that played in the late 30s and early 40s (PHILADELPHIA STORY, etc.). It's such a pity that Lloyd never made another film after this one. Truly a wasted comic genius (though he died a fairly rich man, thanks to the millions his silents gave him years earlier). Also starring Edgar Kennedy and Rudy Vallee.

GODZILLA VS GIGAN

(1971, D: Jun Fukuda)

GODZILLA VS MECHAGODZILLA

(1974, D: Jun Fukuda)

reviewed by Mark Rollic

For you collectors who, for years, have had to be content with public domain titles in the cheap video section for anything vaguely related to the Big G, and could not afford the Paramount series or the occasional offering from another company, now is the time to rejoice! Among all those copies of GODZILLA VS MEGALON (how many video companies have not released this one???) and SON OF GODZILLA, come these two releases from New World Home Video, all for under \$10!

New World has created a lively, colorful, and very attractive box for their two tapes, with the banner proclaiming "All New! Never Before Seen On Video!" although it appears that VidAmerica released GODZILLA VS THE COSMIC MONSTER (same movie as GODZILLA VS MECHAGODZILLA) on a double bill with GODZILLA VS MEGALON some years back on the same tape. At any rate, these are not the TV prints or the Cinema Shares prints that have been around for a while New World went directly to Toho for their masters, and it certainly shows! The credits are in the letterbox format, but the bulk of the movie takes up your entire screen. The original titles are on the prints, instead of the U.S. theatrical release prints. The Toho logo is on each one, following, of course New World's logo. Picture quality is incredibly sharp, and each movie is uncut. Best of all, New World has recorded the two at the 2-hour speed (SP)!!

If anyone can find fault, it might be in the movies themselves. GODZILLA VS GIGAN is without doubt the worst in the series, due to the stupid story and villains, and the fact that Godzilla and Anguirus talk in English!! The movie is check-full of stock footage, and the music is taken from past Toho monster flicks. GODZILLA VS MECHAGODZILLA, though not one of the best, is far from the worst, and it introduces one of Godzilla's best foes. A jazzy music score is heard in this one, and it leads to the even-better sequel, TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA, available on Paramount Video in a heavily-edited print.

No matter what the quality of the movies, true die-hard Godzilla fans should do themselves a favor and pick these up fast. Hopefully New World will see fit to release some more. Now about a truly good quality copy of GODZILLA VS MEGALON???



This issue's selection is a choice one, but then all the columns I've done for Brain Drain have been full of choice cuts. Prime rib and all that red, messy, globular stuff. I've gotten some other publications besides the usual "psychotronic" film fare which I decided should be reviewed as well. So hold on to your hats 'cause here we go.

BLOODTIMES, c/o Louis Paul & Heidi Stock, 44 East 5th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11218. This no frills, one-sided, 14 page 'zine kicks the proverbial ass. The latest issue is a nicely done Dario Argento film retrospective. Publisher Paul and Editor Stock know their material. They scan all the Argento flicks from *BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE* to *OPERA* (not yet available stateside-sounds like a weird one!). Indepth and only a \$1.50.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA, c/o Craig Ledbetter, PO Box 5367, Kingwood, Texas 77325. Craig used to publish *HIGH TECH TERROR* until he became fed up with the domestic material and decided to strike out into foreign territory exclusively. More power to you, dude! Check out this first issue and you'll be scrounging the stores for these "classics." Good luck! One of the best 'zines around! Issue #1 - 50¢, subs are \$6/year.

PSYCHOTRONIC, c/o Michael Weldon, 151 First Avenue, Dpt. PV, New York, N.Y. 10003. Okay, here's the second issue of Weldon's *PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO*, and it's better than the first by far. Michael has brought the Phantasmic fandom up to of J. Q. Public's level of buying power and, as with James Cagney, rubbed it in his face like a sour grapefruit. But what a grapefruit! The cover features a Bigfoot romping with some nude ladies, and the inside is crammed packed with *REVIEWS, REVIEWS, REVIEWS!!!* There's Cleveland's Ghoulardi, the Cycle-Delic sounds of Dave Allen and the Arrows, Interviews with the late Joe Spinelli and the not-so-late (but otherwise dead) Robert Wise. \$3.00 from the above address.

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE, c/o Psychotronic Film Society, PO Box 14633, Chicago, IL 60614-0683. The May '89 issue I was sent included a report on Tim Burton's *BATMAN* movie, articles on the caped crusader, Part II of the "Dirtiest Book Ever Written" (a report on the Attorney General's Report on Pornography 1986), and the like. Chicago looks like a hoppin' place when it comes to 'psychotronic' grindhouses. Single issues: \$1.25.

SHEER FILTH, c/o Dave Flint, 39 Holly Street, Offerton, Stockport, SK1 4DP, ENGLAND. Issue #5 of this 'zine will run you about \$2.00 plus \$1.00 postage. It's worth taking a chance to find out what those folks from across the Big Pond think of US Filth Films and other related junk. This issue includes an exhaustive Dave Friedman (the Sultan of Sleaze) retrospective, reviews of *CARNIVAL ROCK*, *GRUESOME TWOSOME*, and *THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS*, and British FANZINES. Lots of information and reviews! Order your copy today!

GRINDHOUSE, c/o J. Adler, PO Box 7460, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-6030. If you don't mind an entire magazine, hand written in an insane scrawl (very legible scrawl, mind you) with film reviews, 'zine reviews, and a scathing slap at Rod Sims and his *GOREFEST* 'zine, then you might want to try *GRINDHOUSE*. It's funny in places, but the overall effect reminds me of a rabid High School publication full of your typical misogynistic and racial remarks. It looks cool, but one loses interest in it after a while. Subscription cost: \$5/year.

POPVOID, c/o Pop Void Publications, 109 Minna Street Suite #583, San Francisco, CA 94105. One of those bug-eyed Keane kids stares out from the cover of *POP VOID* #1 and from that moment on you know you're nearing trash Valhalla. Jim Morton's latest and swiftest project (see interview on page 3) is a bible for those of us who just can't get enough of Fuzzy Wuzzy, Loudmouth Lime, 50's cans, junk food, and their ilk. Heck, they've even thrown in articles on the books of Ed Wood, Jr. and the poetry of Rod McKuen (when the last time you saw both of them together in one book?) Future issues will include Quisp & Quiske, Andy Milligan, Scott Walker, and too much more. Let's face it-any magazine that gives us an indepth and close up look at the receding career of Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazlewood *has* to be coming from a very special place. Don't be a fool, buy *POP VOID*. \$12.00 (ppd).

Other publications I have previously reviewed:

TEMPLE OF SCHLOCK: SUB: \$3/YEAR, Paul DeCirce, 409 Hixson Ave., Syracuse, NY 13206. Reviews new and old. Good graphics.
CINEMA TEXAS: cost?: Dept. of Radio/Television/Film, University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Year pub. of college calendar films.

A TASTE OF BILE: 50¢/issue, P.O. Box 7150, Waco, Texas 76714-7150. Total piece of shit. Offensive and dumb.

LOONIC VIDEO: Catalog/\$1, 2022 Taraval Street #6427, San Francisco, CA 94116. See "SINISTER STUFF" article in this issue!

FACTSHEET FIVE: 2.25/issue, c/o Guderly, 6 Arizona Avenue, Rensselaer, NY 12144. Review 'zine of independent Publications.

LA LANGOUSTE: Model-Pellex, 3 Rue Des Couples, 67000, Strasbourg, FRANCE. Review 'zine, interesting if you understand French.

SLIMETIME: SUB: \$6/YEAR, Steve Puchalski, 1108 East Genesee St., Syracuse, NY 13210. Great multi-media review 'zine.

THE VIDEO MOVIE GUIDE 1988: \$6.50. Not bad and very dense review book. Lots of Foreign and some Horror. Good reference index.

MONDO VIDEO: Catalog/\$1, 154 Big Spring Circle, Cookeville, TN 38501. Lots of bootlegged Euro-Horror films. Quality/service is low.

CROW: #25/\$3, AFTA Press, P.O. Box A, Wharton, NJ 07885. Interview with Stuart Gordon, lots of dense reviews of 'zines/films/music.

MUTILATION GRAPHICS: Catalog/\$1, 3765 Onole Ct., Shrub Oaks, NY 10588. Sick, gross, nasty T-Shirt catalog (silk-screened).

GRIND: SUB: \$6/YEAR, P.O. Box 32, Old Bridge, NJ 08857. Neat title one page 'zine. Reviews of many types of films.

HAMMER on Home Video, Parker Riggs, 9000 Town Park #1114, Houston, TX 77036. \$25 videos of British Classics. Send for listing.

SF CONTINUUM, S&J Prods., Inc., PO BOX 191, Pasadena Park, NJ 07650. Okay catalog with emphasis on common-found SF video & Laserdiscs.

VIKING VIDEO CLASSICS: Catalog/free, P.O. Box 10089, Burnark, CA 91505. CHEAP VIDEO catalog w/some good titles for less.

BLACKHAWK VIDEO: Catalog/free, 5959 Triumph St., Commerce, CA 90040-1688. High quality videos of old films and serials.

SUBHUMAN: \$1.25, Cecil Doyle, 1509 W. Saint Mary, Lafayette, LA 70508. Excellent 'zine of Weird Films & Stuff.

THE SHOCK REVIEW: \$4/year, 1435 Sprules St., St. Louis, MO 63139. Strange film 'zine, worth looking into.

BRAIN DRAIN



foreign flicks



Back for another dose of foreign films? This time I'll stick to ones that aren't spoken in English at all. That means no more horribly dubbed titles or ones that originated in foreign-but-otherwise-English-speaking countries. I have relegated those to the VIDEO VISIONS department at the beginning of the magazine. As for those Euro-Horror films, their virtual scarcity in their original tongues leads to their future infrequency in this column. I did, however, manage to find two for this issue.

DAS LIFT (1987, D: David Maas)

It's so rare to find a foreign horror film with subtitles, I snatched this unknown film up with glee. Not since THE 4TH MAN had I come across a Dutch "horror" film. DAS LIFT (THE LIFT) proved to be a major disappointment. The film turned out to be a run of the mill SF-"evil industry"-espionage-talkfest with relatively little of the gore promised by a striking box design. The lackluster special effects and amateurish make-up made me wince more than once - not out of fear, but out of sheer embarrassment. It seems an unscrupulous Dutch electronic firm specializing in elevators had imported an out-lawed "organic" micro-chip product from Japan. The chip, once installed into a system, then "reproduces" wildly and takes on some odd animosity towards humanity. The globular brain/machine (looking like green snot dripping from exposed computer panels) delights in killing people by closing elevator doors on their necks, broiling them with the air-conditioning, and choking them with elevator shaft cables. An intrepid elevator repairman finds all the killings suspicious and investigates the secretive lift company with assistance from an investigative reporter (probably the only likable character in the whole stupid film). This is an example of sf/horror film-making which proves that not every European horror movie is a good one. Dutch with English subtitles.

THE 4TH MAN

(1984, D: Paul Verhoeven)

THE 4TH MAN isn't the sequel to Carol Reed's THE THIRD MAN, so get that idea totally out of your head! This is another Dutch film, directed by that hot Hollywood "find" Paul Verhoeven who also did ROBOCOP. His style is polished though gritty, smooth with the appearance of a rough edge. His images are bloody and terrifying, especially when he dwells on Ken Russell-like dream sequences. The film is such an emotional, visual, and pseudo-psychological thriller that I was very disappointed when it came to its explosive and bloody ending. I wanted more bizarre dream images, more dramatic sex scenes (homophobes beware!!), more mental unwrappings of the woman's suspected "Black Widow" affairs. THE 4TH MAN is what another Danish film in this month's column should have been. An excellent cinematic experience (DAS LIFT barely rises above mediocrity). However, both films have a definite Euro-horror feel about them. As with Argento, Lamberto Bava, or even Franco or Fulci(!). Verhoeven opts for a twisted and nightmarishly religious vision of a tortured soul. You have your Christ figures, lots of meat-house blood scenes, "mysterious" Euro-women, "stylish" Euro-men, and, of course, sex. A perfect smorgasbord of surreal images. Enough to delight any Argemophile or insane Franco fanatic. Jeroen Krabbé plays Gerard Reve, a homosexual author/poet that gets involved with a lovely woman (Renee Soutendijk) just to get a chance at laying her boyfriend. Things aren't what they seem, as Reve soon realizes when he stumbles upon Christine's deadly secret. Apparently she makes home movies of her past husbands (she has had three already), then kills them! Who will be the fourth man in her life? A chilling, steamy, and very gory flick. Highly recommended! Includes a castration scene that had me flinching for days!!! YOW! In Dutch with English subtitles.

ZATO ICHI MEETS YOJIMBO

(1970, D: Kihachi Okamoto).

This Japanese import is actually the 20th film in the long running "Ichi, Blind Swordsman" series. Ichi is an apparently mild-mannered masseur by trade, but when angered or hunted (for various reasons which I guess you would have to have seen at least a few more of the films to understand), he is a skilled swordsman. He can "see" with his ears, and at the slightest provocation he can easily dispatch any number of equally talented samurai who wouldn't have expected a blindman's cane to conceal a deadly sword. In this adventure, Ichi (played throughout the entire series by Shinjirō Kato) returns to a small town where he has decided to stay for a while. He visits a former lover (Aygbo Wakao) only to discover that she is a now a prostitute thanks to the evil plans of a local corrupt god official. He also encounters and eventually has a showdown with the wandering Yojimbo or "bodyguard," played to perfection by Toshiro Mifune. Mifune resurrects his early character which appeared in two of Akira Kurosawa's films YOJIMBO (1961) and SANJURO (1962) with all the quirks and crankiness which makes his character such a lovable scumball. In an ironic twist of fate, Yojimbo gets sand in his eyes during a sword duel with Ichi. The blindman then agrees to call off the duel until the other man can see again and the fight is at better odds once more! The final fifteen minutes of the film is splendid. The print of the video is cruddy. There are times where the print used for the transfer jumps and some of the subtitles are washed out and almost unreadable. Otherwise, this is another highly recommended film! In Japanese with English subtitles.

BYE BYE BRAZIL

(1980, D: Carlos Diegues)

I watched this film by chance. I would have probably over looked it primarily due to the title which sounded like some mushy ol' love story between an American woman and some Brazilian plantation owner. A Harlequin Romance on video. I'm glad I decided to keep my VCR running when I tuned into the cable "arts" station BRAVO which aired this Carlos Diegues flick. BYE BYE BRAZIL is a poignant tale of the dredge and slime, the challenge and conquest of the human spirit and that of Brazil. That may sound grandiose, but that's what I got of this film. From the exterior, BBB would appear to be a film about a group of misfits and their travelling carnival which tours backward town picking up just enough cash to keep going. Joe Wilken stars as the ringleader of this rag tag but realistically lovable (compared to the Hollywood-artificially-evil) band. His girlfriend, the exarava's exotic dancer, is the woman obsession of a young man who they pick up on the way. They travel a long, winding, bizarre path through out Brazil encountering one pathetic town after another, and this is where the film hits its biting satire. In one small village, the entire town ignores the "Caravana Rolidé" and cram themselves into the small city hall to watch a lone 9" TV set tucked to a wall. They watch endless commercials about stuff they could never hope to obtain. The villages are slowing disintegrating as people are becoming

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AS DAVE SEES IT!

VIDEO OBSERVATIONS BY DAVE SZUREK

DAY OF THE MANIAC THE SEVERED ARM CANNIBAL GIRLS FEAR SORORITY BABES IN THE SLIMEBALL BOWL-A-RAMA

There are several reasons why **DAY OF THE MANIAC**, an Italian obscurity released in the States by Independent-International, is surprising and even a touch confusing. 1.) It is not the ultra-sleazy splatterfest I had pessimistically expected. 2.) The meaning of the title is unclear. Who is the maniac? One of the villains? The mentally unstable heroine? Or was the title arrived at before the picture was ready, ala Independent's werewolf yarn, **FRANKENSTEIN'S BLOODY TERROR**? 3.) Until one gets hip to the idea that things are told through the eyes of a mental case, (thus leading to surrealism, imagery and wildly misinterpreted perceptions which were probably lost on the drive-in circuit crowd who were the only people exposed to this when it played Detroit a few years ago), the action makes no sense. It's not always even told in proper sequence, for crying out loud! When that is figured out, the flick makes for a bizarre, haunting glimpse at a warped psyche. The nagging sense that there is more than meets the eye and that there might even be hidden metaphysical implications is disturbing. When it's all over, even the viewer is unsure what is real and what is not. 4.) While certainly no classic, it's not bad for what it is. 5.) While not uninteresting, the surrealism, the weirdness quotient, the offbeat treatment and the "cosmic" (but never explicitly stated) overtones "seem" like they should have added up to something even more satisfying than what emerges. There are movies that don't click at all and ones that click perfectly. This is one that clicks *partially*, but doesn't go all the way. And it's never clear what the obstacle is. 6.) The very few descriptions I've read of this say it's about some guy turned serial killer via drug abuse. Hell, that doesn't figure into the plot one iota. Is it possible there was "another" **DAY OF THE MANIAC**? Or did somebody who couldn't figure it out reach the wrong conclusion, only to have others who were trying to review it without seeing it follow his or her lead?

Well, you see, there's this overtly bonkers housewife who, in addition to all her other eccentricities, is plagued by recurring nightmares of a mysterious stranger trying to off her. Then, she starts running into the stranger nearly everywhere she goes. He appears to be stalking her, but for obvious reasons, nobody takes her cries for help seriously. At wits end, she decides to seek solace by partying down with the local devil cult. It is never explained why she sees this as a solution to her problems. Maybe she thinks they'll give her drugs or something???? Anyway, she is initially horrified to discover that the stranger is a particularly unsociable member of the cult. When the cult turns from orgies to human blood sacrifices, she realizes that it was never all about Fun and Games to begin with, renounces membership and runs to the police who laugh off her story as a madwoman's fantasy. Turns out now, however, that Crazy Lady, unbeknownst to she, comes from a long line of lower-caste Satanists and had been promised to them as a child. Furthermore, it is revealed that the stranger has been the cult's "enforcer" for about forty years. Inasmuch as the actor playing him appears not yet forty, weird things happen when he is present and he obviously has a few magical powers by the standards of consensus reality, the viewer can't help but theorize that he is supposed to be a "supernatural being." The cult decides that no one—and especially not one who had been a promise, is permitted to renounce. Enforcer and High Priest—maybe it would make some sense as **DAY OF THE MANIAC**?—who which also appears to have magical powers—go after her, inflicting a few weird experiences as prelude since they see suffering as necessary. All earlier suspicions of the two being "other

than human" are vanquished, though, when near or for the end they meet with rather pedestrian, mundane deaths and don't even get to rise up umpteen times like Michael Myers and his cousins.

If told in a straightforward manner with a "normal" heroine, **DAY OF THE MANIAC** would be just another standard, familiar, formula foreign cheapie. Its "approach" is what makes it unique. **DAY OF THE MANIAC** is not an undiscovered potential "cult film." No, I don't say that. It is, however, worthy of more attention that it has received.

The biggest question about the excruciatingly dull and boring **SEVERED ARM** is why it was ever made. The video print has an almost unintelligible soundtrack. When people talk, we have to figure out what they're saying. Since it's pretty much a snoozer, anyway, few of us expended the energy. To make this an even bigger liability, when there isn't a killing going on, it's primarily a talkfest and unfortunately, one character sounds like he's doing a cheapjack Donald Sutherland impression. From what I can decipher, a bunch of Joe six-pack types go either mining or spelunking. Which it is is not too obvious. Anyhow, there's a cave-in and facing pragmatic reality, the dudes conclude that cannibalism is their only chance for survival. They cut off and eat some guy's arm, but can't get to the rest of him before an unexpected rescue. Miraculously walking around with only one arm but still alive and conscious, the victim flips out and is committed to a mental hospital. Zoom ahead several years and now all involved are professional yuppie types, the intact cave-in survivors are having a reunion, for Christ's sake! As coincidence has it, and the one-armed man is discharged the same weekend, and the survivors, who the script seems to think are sympathetic, start turning up hacked to death. Clues pointing to Old One-Arm are found all over the place. Trouble is, nobody knows where the guy is staying so rather than looking in the phone book, the group's cop and its two-fisted dentist join forces with daughter (60s teen star Deborah Walley) who has become involved ("because she doesn't want Dad to get too deep") in a search for the fellow. Scenes of the search are intercut with shots of an unseen figure claiming victims. Alas the filmmakers have come to know this means that in the finale they'll find out it's not One-Arm at all, and you won't have to be Sherlock Holmes to foresee the "True Culprit" identity. **THE SEVERED ARM** is trite and thoroughly predictable and you've seen it done better before, so why waste your time and money?

Then there's Ivan Reitman's pre-success **CANNIBAL GIRLS**. Yeah, even dwarfs stars small. Stars pre-SCTV Eugene Levy and Andrea Martin staring at the cameras before it dawned on them that they were better suited to "Broad Comedy" than "Straight Dramatics." In all fairness, their style is supposed to be "tongue-in-cheek"—the whole picture is—but they're so bad and the scri's humor is such a constant misfire that it's kinder to forget this. **CANNIBAL GIRLS** fails in nearly every department, and there is no hint whatsoever of a future "V.I.P." in the making. Lackluster and conspicuously lacking in individual style, it packs all the wallop of **A TOUCH OF SATAN** and resembles one of those pointless indie programmers aired on UHF at 2am. Had it not involved several future "names," it's highly likely that it would have been "completely" forgotten by now. No, I wasn't expecting much. For the record, I personally think Reitman's post-spectacular career has been overrated. But I did expect *Disturbia* to be

entertainment—the kind of thing I'd accept as part of a triple-bill. The cast is not only incompetent but lacks Charisma, the direction appears indifferent. There isn't even a perverse sense of charm or aura of enthusiasm hinting that even though it was made by screw-ups, they enjoyed working on it. If there is an aura at all, it's that they were just glad to get this in the can so they could go home and watch television. The writing goes nowhere. Trees died for this!!!!???

Levy's a rapid rock musician. I guess this is because he looks a "tad" less wimpy with long hair, Mandarin mustache and granny glasses and besides, it explains why a "hippie" sort has a fat wallet. Martin is his airhead girlfriend. Together, they are motoring to some place or another, when as usual, the car breaks down in one of those redneck towns that looks like it should have a fat sheriff. But that this was shot in Canada, and the location is allegedly on the outskirts of Toronto. Stranded, they check into the local hotel, a paper-mache place that appears to have no other guests, and spend half the picture listening to the landlady tell the dramatized legend of three former residents, a trio of female witches who terrorized the countryside with a ritual involving the consumption of human flesh. She concludes by directing them to a restaurant which turns out to be run by the warlock Ronald Ulrich and three waitresses the audiences recognizes from the dramatization as the trio. Bad weather causes the couple to accept accommodations in the restaurant's living quarters. Prepared as sacrifices, they're too dumb to realize anything's amiss until well after the viewers do, but by then it's too late. They fall victim and the watcher's mouth gapes open, "Huh? So, what's it all mean?" Perhaps, this is an exercise in Cinematic nihilism?

As I understand it, the theatrical print of **CANNIBAL GIRLS** repeated what is undoubtedly the stupidest "gimmick" of them all. As in Eddie Romero's better **TEROR IS A MAN**, a warning buzzer would go off before "scary scenes," thus enabling the jittery viewer to avert his or her attention. It must have sounded damned few times, although it may have been used to occasionally bring back attention. **CANNIBAL GIRLS** is a total waste; recommended only to diarch film historians who'll watch anything in a "NAME's" early filmography.

FEAR, an Italian number known in its homeland as **MURDER OBSESSION**, probably scared away a few potential viewers by having been distributed by Wizard Video. We know what to expect from Wizard, right? Jess Franco. But this isn't Jess Franco. It's Riccardo Freda, an early mentor of Mario Bava, and those who see it won't be surprised at the connection. If people were scared away, more's the pity as **FEAR** has the potential to become a minor cult piece. Freda takes a superficially over-familiar "foreign cheapie" plot and by handling it with style, obvious care, attention to characterization and more emphasis on atmosphere than gore, or even "implied" gore, not to mention some truly impressive dream sequences, spins an interesting and—despite the meager dubbing which is usually a pet peeve with me—involving web of darkness. A slightly sleazy film star, haunted by the possibility of having murdered his father during a childhood black-out, returns to his ancestral home in hopes of persuading his eccentrically Mid-Victorian era-style family to progress to the present. He starts undergoing black-outs again, people start dropping like flies, a shadowy figure creeps the halls of the family estate and he even renews the feeling of a "diabolical presence" remembered from his childhood. Meanwhile his girlfriend experiences nightmares having to do with a cult of Satanists. What's going on? Well, for a change, the final explanation combines psychological and occult elements, but I've probably revealed too much already.

Rumor has it that back in 1980, **FEAR**, unlike most Wizard acquisitions, had some limited US theatrical exposure under a title other than **FEAR** or **MURDER OBSESSION**. If there is any truth to that rumor, I know neither what the title was, nor what studio handled it. At any rate, **FEAR** is more worthy of a viewing than many other cheap imports that come to mind. Don't be scared away by the generic title or the Wizard label.

SORORITY BABES IN THE SLIMEBALL BOWL-A-RAMA (aka THE IMP) D: Dave DeCoteau.

The most offensive and also most convincing thing about this no-budget combination **PORKY'S**-type fare, soft porn, supposed satire of horror films, and "straight" horror film, occurs near the beginning. This is the absolutely brutal "Hell Week paddling" endured by actresses Brinke Stevens and Michele McClellan as sorority pledges who get about forty hard ones on the panties. Migod, it hardly looks simulated and might turn off all but hardcore sadomasochists! Might even turn some of them off, as the girls register no pleasure or arousal whatsoever, just a lot of pain and anguish! Adding to the disturbing realism, especially inasmuch as the victims are virtually unable to act their way out of a paper bag at other times, are their convincing reactions. McClellan appears on the brink of tears while Stevens comes off unpleasantly surprised as if misled into the belief that it would all be simulated or at least performed with great compassion and gentleness. If it's what it looks like, those on the set must have been true slimeballs not to intervene, and there's no need to ask me how much respect I have for director DeCoteau and the girl (Robyn Rochelle) administering the "beatings" - and seeming to enjoy it. (Granted, the character she plays is depicted as getting her jollies this way, but for crying out loud, she doesn't have to go this overboard, does she?) Say what you will about stunt people and the like going in with their eyes open, but it's difficult to avoid comparing this to a john unfairly exploiting a prostitute's need for economic security. And let's face it, boys and girls, the majority of people in a flick of this economic calibre probably support themselves largely through waiting on tables or collecting welfare checks. People will do all kinds of things when they need the money. That doesn't mean they like them. Perhaps, for all we know, Stevens and McClellan are hookers promised a "different life" and a "more respectable job" if they'd put themselves in the hands of one last corporate John. "Hey baby, I'll pay your next month's rent if you let us beat your ass on screen." Perhaps DeCoteau is pond scum totally lacking in conscience, or maybe he's a raving psycho unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality?

Creating a conspicuous counterpoint, very little of what comes after the above is even remotely convincing.

Spying on the "paddlings" are a trio of kinky voyeuristic teenage nerds. Kinky is my word, as the film implies that getting one's rocks off by watching women get the shit knocked out of them is a universal and pretty "normal" male drive. Anyway, the three sickos are caught slobbering and blackmailed into participating in the next scheduled "initiation stunt"—assisting Stevens and McClellan in the B'n'E of a shopping mall bowling alley. There they meet Linnea Quigley burglarizing the place for personal gain. Instead of dusting the witnesses, Quigley pals around with them, making anti-Preppie cracks and eventually taking a shine to one of the nerds whose personality abruptly changes as if the writer (Sergei somebody-or-other, all of which sounds fake—probably DeCoteau's pseudonym?) had never seen the script's earlier portion. They also encounter the mall's resident demon, a fairly well-animated imp who escapes from a bowling trophy, does comedy monologues and—yeah—talks like Levi Stubbs. "House Mother" and two of her two henchwomen secretly watch the Pledges and the three jerks on mall monitors, hoping they'll screw up and provide some laughs. But the imp discovers them and turns them into gasp—monster characters. One looks like Elsa Lanchester in **BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN** and the "House Mother" herself, like Elvira. Having a natural drive to kill people, the imp dispatches the "female fiends" to chase the "good guys" around the mall. Quigley and her pet nerd, suddenly transformed from maladjusted wimp to stuff "Heroes Are Made Of" (Andras Jones, who I understand also acts as "Andre" Jones) come to the rescue.

SORORITY BABES IN THE SLIMEBALL BOWL-A-RAMA- THE IMP is not as utterly worthless as I had anticipated, although the attempts at humor are about as low as they go. Simultaneously infantile and unsavory, tepid and sick, it's a turkey

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animation



I've been writing about animated stuff since the very first issue of VIDEO VOICE. Cartoons, whether "Kid-Vid" or more adult material (not always the pornographic brand) have been a mainstay in each of the past eleven issues. We've featured shorts, full length features, Saturday morning fare and even an ad or two. This time around I think I'll dip into my past and come up with some choice cuts. With the release of Disney's ROGER RABBIT (through their "adult" film arm, Touchstone), the idea of animation as an acceptable art form has once again been bandied about by film critics the world over (most of whom wouldn't know "classic" animation if it bit them on the butt). ROGER RABBIT was enjoyable (I was amazed by the quality of the animation-period) but classic it ain't. You want art? We got art!

8TH MAN - B/W 1965 30 minutes

8TH MAN was sheer unadulterated genius! I used to watch this program in the afternoon right after kindergarten on the old (pre-home shopping crap) Ch. 61 in the Cleveland area. The entire proto-ROBOCOP idea of turning a slam poetry detective into a law enforcing half-human cyborg was pretty damn intriguing. His name was Tobor! He had a girlfriend! He smoked a special brand of cigarettes to get an energy boost! What more could a five year old want? The show was packed with action, lots of science fiction gadgetry, and I loved it! I even had an old sweatshirt with a big eight on it...top that! After the years began to peel away my memories, I still remembered various exciting episodes and even the dorky theme tune. Recently I stumbled across the Star Classics budget cassette of "The Armored Man," one of my favorite episodes. I shelved out \$2.99 and sat through thirty minutes of flickering mis-tracking (highly reminiscent of bad UHF reception) to relive a childhood memory. Was I disappointed? NO WAY! Next to my live-action hero ULTRAMAN, there's nothing I enjoy more than the cheaply animated adventures of 8TH MAN. The pure comic book approach to the animation is one of it's biggest assets. It's as though each frame was copied out of some obscure Japanese manga mag from twenty odd years ago. Throughout this step back into the glory days of black and white cartoons there are some wild action shots, some wicked foreshortening and some amazing battle sequences. The story has something to do with the Japanese government turning one of their own soldiers into a mechanized monster. It's truly exciting! My only real gripe is that the American dubbing is off. It just doesn't work. I doubt if any of the post-TRANSFORMERS tee vee brats would be able to appreciate this animated enigma. The "energy absorbing" cigarette smoking and the absence of color would turn any modern-day UHF and cable stations away from broadcasting the show nowadays. So far, Star Classics have only released this sole episode but see my Childer Theatre Video interview on page 16 for further information.

Another find from this period--and from the same video company--is the giant-robot/savior GIGANTOR. Produced in 1964 I have very, very vague memories of this program. So distant are those recollections that I had to look twice at the box art of WILL THE REAL GIGANTOR PLEASE STAND UP to realize what I had stumbled onto! Remember JOHNNY SOCKO'S FLYING ROBOT? Johnny controlled Giant Robot from a remote-control-disguised watch. GIGANTOR's idea is similar, however instead of a fancy watch our boy hero controls his robot with the aid of a bulky control box. While 8TH MAN features semi-realistic artwork, this program's good and badguys are highly stylized to the point of being wildly bizarre. For example in WILL THE REAL GIGANTOR...the evil dude, Mr. Big, has a bloated torso perched upon some spindly legs! Likewise his sly-boddy head is dwarfed by his oversized bow-tie! GIGANTOR is a brainless robot that does nothing but do the battles for his boy-owner. Pretty exciting stuff for a b/w cartoon--violent as well as silly. Also available is another robotic battle-fest called DANGER'S DINOSAURS, where in which GIGANTOR is almost completely bashed apart by some aquatic, dinosaur-like robots!! Simply put: amazing!!

There is still the evident danger of harping too much about racism in old animated cartoons. Racist cartoons creep up once in a while on TV as well as in cheap children's video where the distributors don't care and put anything on a "cartoon classic" tape anthology. Take for example Castle Video's WOODY WOODPECKER budget tape for around \$4.00. You used to buy regular and Super 8mm films at the local shopping mart, then you no doubt were aware of the condensed films which Castle put out. My family still has a box of them at home, neatly packed away until a night when somebody decides to dig out my Dad's expensive projector and set up the screen. Castle has an impressive selection of cheap video cartoons for sale. They are packaged in cheap yellow boxes, but feature (or so they proclaim) TDK tape within their cheap shells. This particular volume, though marked as a Woody Woodpecker collection actually contains only one of four cartoons which actually feature this animated animal. Woody, Universal's answer to the star-studded Warner Brothers' small collection of loons, stars with a hungry cat in a early 40s tale of mutual starvation "Pantry Panic" is actually pretty funny as far as Walter Lantz cartoons go. I never really thought his was very entertaining, but this is a curious story of intelligent animals trying to devour each other (a strange concept, if you think about it. Just as weird as Daffy Duck sitting down to a turkey dinner and digging into a leg of a fellow fool!!!) has a number of chuckle highs as mutilation, murder and cannibalism skip, hop and jump across the screen. I loved it. The second feature is the Australian import BIMBO'S AUTO, one of Dave Porter's limited budget efforts. Porter delights the viewer with his brand of eye-popping (literally) surrealism. Though not as good as his RABBIT STEW (available from LOONIC VIDEO on "British Animations, Volume One"), this cartoon is the best of this collection. The last two are rather odd ones, but clearly second thoughts if anything. BOY MEETS DOG (another Lantz project) is one of those "bad father taught a lesson" cartoons. When a little boy joyfully brings home a puppy, his father (grumbling and bellowing in a very gruff John Carradine-I swear it's him--voice) kicks the animal and sends his child off to bed. In a very Disney-com-Fleischer conclusion, the Father is brought to trial and tortured by some of the child's imaginary playmates till he finally repents his evil ways. OUCH! Finally, the excellently dressed but horribly racist U. B. Iwerks cartoon LITTLE BLACK SAMBO rounds out things out. Why did this purely racist cartoon into a "kid's" cartoon collection? Not too cool Castle Video! I can see it getting into a volume of Iwerks' work for purely historical reasons, but to include it in something impressionable children are going to sit back and absorb is downright intolerable! There are literally hundreds if not thousands of Public Domain cartoons to choose from to include on a "kids" cartoon collection.

Every company was guilty of bigotry when it came to making animated shorts. There are some bizarre cartoons Chuck Jones did for Warner Brothers that would make any liberal minded individual shudder. Some of these even make it on tv every once in a while. You can buy Rhino Video's WEIRD CARTOONS Volume Two and laugh your lilly white asses off at "Inky" (a Chuck Jones series featuring an African Pygmy complete with the 1940's style of "black face.") getting into a whole lot of trouble in Warner Brothers' INKY AND THE MINAH BIRD. Granted anyone would

men funny were they in "Inky" shoes, but Jones chose unwisely to make it a stereotypical figure, not some generic animal that gets to act stupid. Next is the goofy **OLDANYTHING** which is as bizarre as it is racist. Not everything on this video is an historical embarrassment. There is an early Disney live-action-in-a-cartoon Alice animation called **ALICE THE TOREADOR** that predates the splendor of **ROGER RABBIT** by seventy some odd years. The Lowell Thomas Tall Tales episode, **IT'S A BIRD**, is a wonderful piece of live-action/stop film animation about the capture of the rare metal-eating bird of central Africa. Dumb but very entertaining. To round things out, we have two Fleischer cartoons, a Pat Sullivan **FELIX THE CAT**, some "intermission" trailers and an Arthur Davis B/W Daffy Duck WWII propaganda cartoon called **SCRAP HAPPY DAFFY** where our duck battles a Nazi goat! Amazing! This cartoon alone is worth the cost of this video!

While I'm on the subject of Rhino Video I might as well mention that they have continued to release **ROGER RAMJET** episodes on cassette. Volumes 2 & 3 are available for around \$10.00 apiece, and I found mine at a local Ames store. Their titles are **THE RETURN OF ROGER RAMJET**, and **THE ADVENTURES OF ROGER RAMJET**. Each episode if full of the usual offbeat and completely stupid (but highly entertaining) cartoon gags that are particular to this series. See Roger Ramjet, All American Hero, pop energy pills to beat up the bad guys!

To round out this issues column of memory-jogging cartoons, I have a new volume of those zany Paul Terry cartoons from **LOONIC VIDEO**. **AESOP'S FABLES Volume One** is loaded with eight of these B/W gems from the early 1920s (**LOONIC** supplies vintage 20s music for soundtracks). These primitive, almost flip-bookish cartoons are, at best, crated tales of animals and humors co-existing in a bizarre world of post-Structural cartoons. My favorites include **UP IN THE AIR**, **FABLE OF THE ALLEY CAT** and **THE RUN AWAY BALLOON**. **LOONIC** has even gone as far as giving this series a decent box design! Of course, I wasn't alive when these originally played in the theatres, nor do I have a clear memory of them (did Cleveland's **CAPTAIN PENNY** show a few?), but this doesn't diminish my love of them. The Van Buren Studios produced these shoe-string budget cartoons up until (I believe) the late 1930s. However, due to Disney's massive production company, Van Buren couldn't compete and eventually faded from the industry.

STOP FILM animation is another matter altogether. I guess most of us who were into SFantasy films and had the access to a cheap 8mm camera did some sort of stop-motion animation (be it what is now popularly called "puppetation" or the grand old stand-by: clay). My brother and I converted (or, rather, decimated!) my father's backyard garage for our studio. We'd blow up spaceships, set off volcanos, had monster battles, and so forth. We had our own heroes back then, Joel loved **KING KONG** and I was into the Cyclops from **THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD**. We had some exciting moments, especially when the threat of noxious fumes from one of our flaming plasti-clay "monsters" forced us outside of the garage coughing and hacking! We prided ourselves in seeing many of the animated film "classics." It wasn't until recently though, that I've been able to see some of the "lost" films I wanted to watch back then.

While Willis O'Brien's **THE LOST WORLD** was no lost classic (long available on 8mm from the library, and it was shown on our PBS station every once in a while), I hadn't seen it for a long time. I found this 1922 animated gem through Sinister Cinema. The copy is from a "tinted" edition I had heard about (complete with a score added on later) but never seen. While you may cringe at the thought of a "colourized" edition of this film, protest too much. Each scene is tinted a colour, as if someone flipped a theatrical gel over the projector at the appropriate moments. The colour doesn't detract from the entire film, and in some spots it seems to add the correct atmosphere. The story has Professor Challenger mounting an expedition to hunt up some dinosaurs. He finds them and a mean old cave man to boot. Some harrowing adventures follow, and the Prof. manages to capture a Brontosaurus and taking it back to London where it consequently breaks loose from its imprisonment and rampages through the capital city. After squashing some people and biting others to death, the "hermit" lead-enter crosses the London Bridge and then dips into the Thames to swim out to sea and freedom. A nice ending for a dinosaur lover like myself! The added bonus to this **SINISTER** print is that Greg Luce has included a rare Thomas Edison animated short called "The Caveman." This weird short took me by surprise. I didn't know Edison's production company made silly little escapists projects like this fun-filled bit of celluloid slapstick. It's dumb, but is worth the cassette alone.



Another film I had thought had been lost was Edward Small's **JACK THE GIANT KILLER** (1958). From what I had been led to understand, the rights to this film had been bought up. All the animation was cut out of it and it was made into a children's musical?! That was one of the rumors that ran wild at a SFantasy convention I attended back in the mid-seventies. I did purchase a copy from **CLEAR VIDEO** (see page 17) a few months back and loved just about every second of it (well, I loved the animated bits). The acting was kinda dull at times and the live-action direction was pretty bad. Producer Edward Small had apparently seen Harryhausen's **SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD** and wanted to cash in on that film's box office success. He hired the actor Kerwin Mathews who had been Sinbad in the aforementioned film to play the part of Jack. He even copied some of the plotting and fight sequences, such as the battle with the Cyclops on the beach. This time Jack is confronted by Camron, a two-eyed clone of the cyclops!!! There is even a Two-headed giant battling a sea-serpent. This reminds me of the much better Cyclops verses the Dragon fight seen at the climax of the Sinbad flick. All in all, though, I can't complain. I loved the cheap Wa Chang modles (who was later, reported to have disowned any involvement in the film!) which were animated by a young Jim Danforth (he complained that they kept falling apart as he manipulated them). There very crudeness reminded me of some of my dismal efforts in that garage! It's a flick worth seeing, however, I would imagine it is rarely seen on TV and is probably only available through people like **CLEAR VIDEO**. Catch it at all costs, but fast-forward through all the human antics and get to the monsters. That's where this film really shines!

SZUREK CONT.

alright, but after the initial bad taste in the mouth has died down. I realized I had seen worse. For Empire it's not terrible -- just bad enough and it's probably even a cut above DeCoteau's previous **CREEPAZOID**s, albeit not a very large one. Surprise: Lianca Quigley whom I have never thought of as much as an actress, isn't bad this time around. In fact, aside from a near-bit player thrown in for comedy relief, she's the only decent member of the cast. Maybe she just looks good vbeause everyone else is so bad? The movie, itself isn't too hot, but if you're an S&M freak with plenty of spare time and a dollar you have to get rid of, look for it in the bargain bin.

FOREIGN CONT.

aware of the outside world and are beginning to flock to cities such as Brazilia. There are pathetic scenes of Indians driven from the rain forests, deforestation, greed, disaster, and human virtue. It's a powerful, though whimsical film. Recommended to those of you out there looking for something else in foreign film other than **LA STRADA** or **ALPHAVILLE**. In Portuguese with English subtitles.



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Jack the Giant Killer

PENDORAGON, LEGENDARY KING OF EVIL, SEEMS TO ADD TO HIS EXAMIN. BY ADAPTING THE PRINCESS ELAINE.

BUT JACK SLAYED THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS FROM THE CLUTCHES OF PENDORAGON'S HORRED GAINS.

SURROUNDED BY HIS MONSTERS, PENDORAGON WATCHES IN HIS MIND CRYSTAL AS JACK AND ELAINE ESCAPE.

THE SWORD OF THE KING WITCHES IN HONOR OF THE FLEETING FAIR ELAINE. IT BATTERED IN PENDORAGON'S DREAMS.

JACK, LED BY A WARD AND BATTLES THE TERRIFIC PENDORAGON TALKS MEN IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE PRINCESS.

CAPTIVE, HE FACES THE TORM OF PENDORAGON'S COURT UNWILLING THAT HE PENDORAGON'S SON TRANSFORMED INTO A MONSTER.

BY GLASSON HILL, JACK FEELS HIMSELF RESCUE THE PRINCESS AND PLACES FOR SAFETY THROUGH THE CRYSTAL OF TORMENTS.

EMERGED AT THEIR ESCAPE, PENDORAGON SUMMONS ALL THE FENDS AND WILD FORCES OF EVIL TO STOP THE LOVERS.

TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO THE GREATEST FORM OF MONSTER, PENDORAGON DRAPEL WITH JACK IN A FINAL BATTLE TO THE DEATH.

EDWARD SMALL
Jack the Giant Killer

WRITTEN BY MATTHEWS
DIRECTED BY KERRON WATKINS
CASTING BY JEFFREY J. HARRIS
PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JEFFREY J. HARRIS
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JEFFREY J. HARRIS, JEFFREY J. HARRIS
PRODUCED BY JEFFREY J. HARRIS
SCREENPLAY BY EDWARD SMALL
DIRECTED BY KERRON WATKINS

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